The Pirate of the Mediterranean

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Chapter One.

Malta, which I have selected as the opening scene of the following story, is, from its historical recollections, its fine climate, and brilliant skies, a very interesting spot; although, for such beauty as its scenery possesses, it must be acknowledged that it is indebted very much more to art than to nature. Notwithstanding, however, the noise it has made in the world, and will, I suspect, should we ever be driven into a war with our vivacious continental neighbour, again make, it is but a rock some twenty miles long, and twelve broad, in the middle of the Mediterranean, with a smaller rock, Gozo, to the north of it, and was, probably, at one time of this planet's existence, merely a continuation of Sicily or Italy's toe, or a lump, as it were, kicked off into the middle of the sea. If, also, report speaks true, the very soil which gives verdure to its valleys, and nourishes its sweet-scented orange-groves, was imported from richer lands; yet, notwithstanding this, a larger number of inhabitants of every religion, colour, and costume, continue to exist on its surface, than on any similar-sized portion of the globe. But in its capital, Valetta, with its magnificent fortifications, and superb harbour, are centred its chief attractions, and which have gained for it a name imperishable on the page of history as the bulwark of Christendom, against the pagan hosts of the Saracens.

But as my tale is with the present rather than with the past, I will not stop to describe how, when it was called Mileta, Saint Paul landed on the island, — how the Vandals and Goths took possession of it, and were driven out by Belisarius, — how in 1530, the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem, driven away from Rhodes, here settled, — how they built a fortress which withstood the mighty army of the Turks, and how those gallant gentlemen hurled back the infidels defeated and disgraced, — how they at length degenerated, and its inhabitants, deceived by treachery from within and without their gates, yielded their liberty to the great enemy of Europe, Buonaparte, and were unmercifully ill-treated, and pillaged, — and how, in the year 1800, with the the aid of an English fleet and a small English army, they drove out their conquerors, and put themselves under the protection of Great Britain.

How Mr Cameron was first Civil Commissioner, and was succeeded by Sir Alexander Ball, a man justly endeared to the inhabitants as the sharer of their toils and victory, — how he was followed by Sir Hildebrand Oakes, after whom

reigned, as their first Governor, for eleven years, commencing in 1813, Sir Thomas Maitland, called by irreverent lips, King Tom; a gallant soldier, and the terror of ill-doers, on whose decease the Marquis of Hastings and General Ponsonby successively became chiefs.

It was during the time that one of the three last-mentioned governors ruled the land, that the events I am about to narrate took place, and as it is in the capital, Valetta, and its magnificent harbour, that our scene more particularly lies, it is somewhat important that the reader should have them described to him.

Valetta is situated on that side of the island which faces the north-east, though towards the southern end of it. The harbour is of a very peculiar shape, and if the reader should not happen to possess a chart of it, he may form one by placing his left hand on the table, with the fingers separated as widely as possible from the middle finger: then let him bend up the third finger of his right hand, and place, widely apart, the tips of the others over the forefinger of his left hand. The middle finger of his left hand is Valetta, with Saint Elmo Castle on the nail, and its palaces and ramparts running along up to the knuckles. The space on the right is the Great Port, and on the left, Port Marsa Musceit, or the Quarantine Harbour. The tip of the little finger of the right hand is Port Ricasoli. On the bent-up third finger is the Bighi Palace, now a naval hospital, built by Napoleon as a residence for himself. The middle finger is the Burgh, with Port Saint Angelo at the end. The fore-finger is called Isola, with the Cotonera fortifications at the knuckle, and the thumb is denominated Carodino, where the Palatario is situated, while the spaces between each of the fingers are smaller harbours of great depth and security; and from Port Saint Angelo, numerous tiers of frowning batteries completely enfilade the entrance of the harbour — the approach to which is further defended by Forts Saint Elmo and Ricasoli. On the opposite side of Port Marsa Musceit, are two forts — Port Tigne at the entrance, and Fort Manuel; and there are several indentations, but of less depth and importance than those to the south. Besides the forts I have mentioned, the city is protected by the Floriana lines, and several other works. Indeed, it is said that there are sixty miles length of walls, which, in these economical times, are allowed slowly to crumble away. If our merchants value their trade with the East — if our rulers value our possession of India — if our philanthropists value the civilisation of the world, and the continuance of peace, let not Malta be neglected. To open the door is not the way to keep out a thief.

Valetta is a place of life, bustle, and animation. The Maltese are a busy people, given to gesticulation; and it is full of naval and military officers, and soldiers, and sailors, who are not addicted to quietude, especially the latter; and there are Greeks, and Moors, and Spaniards, and Italians, and Jews innumerable, congregated there, and priests and friars of all orders, who delight in the ringing of bells, so that silence is little known in this city of ramparts, steps, big guns, and churches. The streets are wide and handsome;

those running along the middle finger, as I have described, are on a level, while those which lead up from the water are at right angles to them, and are occasionally steep, so that, in most instances, they consist of a broad flight of steps, the best known of which are the Nix Mangiare stairs, leading from the chief landing-place at the Great Port to the upper part of the town. The houses are balconied, lofty, and spacious, with terraces on the roofs, whence, in clear weather, Etna is visible; and where, in the cool of the evening, the inhabitants may enjoy the refreshing breeze from the sea, and behold it, in its intense blueness, dotted with white sails gliding in all directions over its surface. It is full of fine churches, the towers of which rise above the flat roofs of the palace-like houses, the whole surrounded by a broad walk, and a fringe of ramparts bristling with cannon.

It is to that part of the fortifications facing the mouth of the Great Port that I particularly wish to conduct the reader.

It was some four hours or so past noon when the boat of a British man-of-war ran in alongside the landing-place at the fort of Nix Mangiare stairs, and out of her stepped two persons, whose blue jackets, adorned with crown-and-anchor buttons, and the patches of white cloth on their cohars proclaimed them to belong to the exalted rank of midshipmen in the Royal Navy. But many might envy the free joyous laugh in which they indulged, seemingly on finding themselves on shore, and the light elastic tread with which they sprang up the long flight of steps before them, distancing, in a moment, several civilians and soldiers of various ranks, who, puffing and blowing, with handkerchiefs at their foreheads, were toiling upwards, while they arrived at the summit without even giving way to a gasp, and as cool, apparently, as when they landed. Their ears, as they went up, were saluted by —

"Yah hassare, carita — Nix mangiar these ten days, sar — Mi moder him die plague, sar! mi fader him die too," and other pathetic cries and similar equally veracious assertions, from numerous cripples, deformed creatures, and children of all ages, in rags and tatters, who endeavoured to excite their compassion by exhibiting their wounds and scars. The two youths had time to put their hands in their pockets, and to distribute a few pence to the wretched-looking beings on their way; both pocket and heart, if that were possible, being made lighter thereby. On reaching the top of the flight of stairs, without stopping to contemplate the height they had ascended, they turned to the right, and took the way along the ramparts towards Fort Saint Elmo. There seemed not to have been the slightest necessity for their hurry, as they appeared to have come on shore simply to take a walk, for they now slackened their pace, and proceeded on side by side.

"Well, I'm so glad, Duff, that you have joined us," exclaimed the one who appeared to be somewhat the eldest. "Who'd have thought it, when we parted four years ago at old Railton's that we were next to meet out here. I didn't think you would have got leave to enter the service."

"Neither did I expect to get afloat, and still less to become your messmate,

when you, lucky dog that I thought you, left school. I moped on there for nearly another year, and then wrote to my governor and told him that if he didn't let me go to sea I should never be fit for anything. At last he believed that I was in earnest, and with a light heart I turned my back upon Brook-green, and shipped on board the old Rodney. But, I say, old fellow, what sort of a chap is our skipper? He looks like a taut hand."

"There is not a better fellow afloat," was the answer. "He's none of your milk-and-water chaps who'll let butter melt in their mouths, of that you may be assured; but he knows what ought to be done, and what man can do; and he makes them do it too. There's no shirking work or being slack in stays when he carries on the duty, and there's not a smarter ship in the service, nor a happier one either, though he won't allow an idler on board. The fact is, my boy, both officers and men know that no one can shirk their work, so it comes easy to all, and we have more leave and less punishment than nearly any other vessel on the station.

"But, I say, Jack Raby, is it true, that he makes the midshipmen do the duty of topmen?" asked the youngest of the two.

"I believe you, my boy," answered Jack Raby. "He makes all the youngsters lie out in the topsail-yards, and hand the canvas in fine style, ay, and black down the rigging at times too. By Jove, he's the fellow to make your kid-glove-wearing gentlemen dip their hands in the tar-bucket, and keep them there, if he sees they are in any way squeamish about it."

"By jingo, he seems to be somewhat of a Tartar," exclaimed the midshipman called Duff, with a half-doubtful expression of countenance, as if his new shipmate was practising on his credulity.

"Not a bit of it," was the rejoinder. "Let me tell you, that you'll soon find that your slack captains are the worst to sail with. They let every one do as they like till all hands begin to take liberties, and the hard work falls on the most willing, and they then suddenly haul up, and there is six times more flogging and desertion than in a strict ship, and she soon becomes a regular hell afloat. I hate your honey-mouthed, easy-going skippers, who simper out, 'Please, my good men, have the goodness to brace round the foreyard when the ship's taken aback.' No, no — give me a man who knows how to command men. Depend on it. Duff, you'll like Captain Fleetwood before you've sailed with him a week, if you are worth your salt, mind you, though."

By this time they had reached an angle of the ramparts, where, jumping up on the banquette, they could enjoy a good view up the harbour.

"There," exclaimed Raby, pointing to a fine man-of-war brig, which lay at the mouth of the dockyard creek just off Fort Saint Angelo. "Isn't the Ione a beauty now?"

"Yes, she is, indeed; and a fine craft, I dare say, in every respect," answered Duff.

"Oh, there's nothing can come up to her!" exclaimed Jack Raby, warming with his subject. "She'll sail round almost any ship in the fleet; and I only wish,

with Charlie Fleetwood to command her, and her present crew, we could fall in with an enemy twice her size. We should thrash him, I'd stake my existence on it, and bring him in as a prize before long."

"Glorious!" exclaimed the other youth, catching the enthusiasm of his companion. "It's a pity the war is over. I'm afraid there's no chance of any fun of that sort."

"Oh, you don't know — something may come out of this row between the Greeks and the Turks; and we, at all events, shall have some amusement in looking after them, and cruising up the Archipelago — where I hear we are to be sent, as soon as we are ready for sea."

Jack Raby was the speaker.

"How soon will that be?" asked his companion. "We might sail to-morrow, I should have thought."

"Why, you see, there are more reasons than one for our not being ready," observed Jack. "And I suspect the skipper himself is in no hurry to get away; for, don't you go and talk about it now, but the fact is, he has been and fallen desperately in love with a sweetly pretty girl, who, from what I can observe, likes him not a little in return, so he'll be very sorry to get out of sight of her smiles; at least, I know that I should be loath to be beyond hailing distance if I were in his place. Let me give you a piece of advice, Duff; don't go and fall in love. It is a very inconvenient condition for a midshipman to be in, let me tell you."

"Not if I can help it," said Duff. "At least, till I am a lieutenant. However, I felt rather queer about the region of the brisket the other night, when I was dancing with that pretty little Maltese girl, with the black eyes, and cherry lips, though we neither of us could understand a word the other said, and I didn't know what was to come of it. Fortunately, next morning, the sensation had gone off again, and I got out of the scrape. But the fact is, since I grew up (the rogue was scarcely fifteen), I have been so little on shore, that I have had no time to lose my heart."

Jack Raby, who was a year older, and therefore considered himself a man at all events, burst into a loud fit of laughter, in which his companion joined him, at the absurdity of their conversation; of which, although they had spoken in earnest, they were both somewhat conscious. "But I say, old fellow, without any more humbug about love and such like bosh, just look at the dear old craft! how beautifully she sits on the water — what a graceful sheer she has — and how well her sixteen guns look run out, like dogs from their kennels, all ready to bite. You should see her under weigh though, and how beautiful she looks with her canvas spread! You'd know her for a man-of-war twenty miles off by the cut of her royals. See, what square yards she's got! and how well her masts stand. How light she looks aloft — and yet everything that is required — not a block too large — and yet everything works as easy as possible. On deck, too, you'll find there's no jim-crack nonsense about her — everything is for service, and intended to last; and yet, where there is any brass or varnished wood, it's kept

as bright and clean as can be. There isn't a ship on the station can come up to us in reefing or furling; and, let them say what they like in other ships, there isn't a happier berth, or a better set of fellows to be found, on board any of them — take my word for it, Duff."

"Well, from all you say, I haven't a doubt but that I shall like the little Ione very much," observed the other. "And, at all events, I wouldn't mind a worse ship, for the sake of being with you. But, I say, who is the young lady your skipper — I may now, though, call him our skipper — has fallen in love with?"

"A Miss Garden. She is very young, and very fair, and very bright and lively. I'm not surprised at any one's admiring her! it's much more wonderful that everybody doesn't fall in love with her over head and ears: for my part, though I've only seen her two or three times, I'm ready to fight and die for her, too, if it were necessary."

"Oh, of course! that we should all be ready to do, as in duty bound, for our skipper's wife, and much more for the lady of his love," observed Duff; "but I want to know who she is?"

"I was going to tell you. She has no father nor mother; and her only living relation, that I know of, is an old colonel Gauntlett, on whose protection she is entirely thrown. He is rather a grumpy old chap, they say — but she has no help for it; and he takes her about wherever he goes. He has got some money — but he hates the navy, and swears she shall never marry a sailor, or if she does he'll cut her off with a farthing. He came out here some months ago, and has never let any one with a blue jacket come inside his door; but, somehow or other, Captain Fleetwood got introduced to her, and as he was in mufti, the old chap didn't know he was in the navy, and told him he should be happy to make his acquaintance. He did not find out his mistake for some time; and when he did — my eyes, what a rage he was in! He did not mind it so much, though, afterwards, as he is going away in a few days, and thought the captain and his niece were not likely to meet again; but the skipper, you see, is not the man to let the grass grow under his feet in making love, more than in anything else, and in the mean time he had managed to come it pretty strong with Miss Garden. How it will end I can't say — I only know that our captain is the last man in the world to yield up a lady if he loves her, and believes she loves him — he'd as soon think of striking his flag to an enemy while he had got a shot in the locker; so, I suppose, he'll either win over the old cove, or run off with her, and snap his fingers at him — he doesn't care for his money; — and, to my idea, that would be the best way to settle it."

"So I think," observed the other youngster. "I've made up my mind, when I want to marry, if I cannot get the old one's consent, to take French leave, and settle the matter in an offhand way. But where do you say the grumpy colonel and his pretty niece are going to; for the captain must look sharp after her, or he'll be carrying her away somewhere inland, out of sight of salt water, where he can't get at her."

"No fear of that; the old dragon has too great an opinion of his own

soldiership not to fancy that he can keep guard over his ward," observed Raby. "But we'll see if a sailor can't weather on him. Nothing I should like so much as to help the skipper, and I only hope he may ask me. He hasn't much time to lose, either; for we heard that the colonel and his niece were bound shortly for Cephalonia, or one of the Ionian Islands, where he has got an appointment. If we were ordered there also, we might find an opportunity; but, you see, the captain won't have the chances of meeting her without being observed, which he has here, and a hundred to one the uncle claps half a dozen lobsters as sentries over her, if he sees the Ione come off the place."

"Then I should be for carrying her off at once, if I were the captain, and letting the old lion growl away without her," exclaimed Duff; and the two midshipmen walked on fully persuading themselves into the hope, that they should be called upon to assist their captain in running away with Miss Garden.

There were few people abroad to interrupt their conversation; for the heat of the sun kept most of the Maltese within doors. As the Italians, or Spaniards, I forget which, observe, none but dogs and Englishmen walk the streets when the sun shines in summer. There were, however, sentries on duty, and a few seamen belonging to men of war; or merchantmen of various nations would pass by; and here and there a cowled priest, a woman in the dark faldetta, a ragged beggar boy — or an old gentleman in three-cornered hat, a bag-wig, riding on a donkey, with a big red cotton umbrella over his head, would appear from one of the neighbouring streets, as necessity called him forth.

On the two happy youths went, careless of the heat, till they reached that part of the ramparts called the lower Barraca. It is a broad open space directly above the water, where stands a conspicuous object from the sea, in the form of a Grecian temple, a monument to the memory of that excellent man, and brave officer, Sir Alexander Ball, one of Lord Nelson's most steemed captains. As they reached the spot, they encountered a person, who was apparently about to descend the way they had come; he was a man of about forty years old, with a countenance slightly weather-beaten, and hands which showed that they were no strangers to ropes and tar, and there was an undeniable roll in his gait, which betrayed the seaman, though his costume was that of a denizen of the shore; he wore a long, swallow-tailed, black coat, a round beaver hat, and a coloured waistcoat; but the wide duck trousers, and low shoes were those of a thorough salt. Jack Raby looked at him earnestly, and then held out his hand, which was shaken warmly by the other.

"What, Bowse, as I live," he exclaimed; "what has brought you to Malta, old fellow? I thought you were snugly housed at home with Mrs Bowse, and had given up the sea altogether."

"Well, sir, so did I think too, and for a time I was comfortable enough; but at last I began to wish to have a look at the blue water again; and I grew sick, and then sicker, till I felt that nothing but a sniff of the salt air would do me good. You know, sir, when I was bo'sun of the jolly little Dart, your first ship, I took to learning navigation, and was no bad hand at it. Ah! I loved that craft, and

nothing but having that windfall of a fortune would have made me leave her. Well, as I was saying, when I wished to go to sea again, I turned in my mind that I could not do better with my money than take a share of a merchantman, and go master of her. No sooner said than done. Up I went to London, where I knew a respectable shipowner. He was glad enough to favour my wishes, for he knew he could trust me; and I soon became part owner and master of the Zodiac, a fine brig, of a hundred and sixty tons. I have made two voyages in her, and am now bound to the eastward to Cephalonia and Zante. I sail to-morrow or next day, according to circumstances. If you'll step up here, sir, I think you'll see her, for we've hauled out ready for a start, as soon as my passengers come on board."

As the master of the merchantman spoke, he advanced to a part of the ramparts over which they could look down upon the great harbour, where, some way below the custom-house, was seen a merchant brig, laden and ready for sea.

"She's as fine a sea boat as ever floated, I can assure you, sir. It's a pleasure to be her master," he continued, as he pointed with pride to her. Every good seaman is fond of his vessel, and overlooks her faults, whatever they may be, as a good husband does those of his wife.

"I am heartily glad of your success, Bowse, I can assure you," said the midshipman warmly; "I owe you much; for you gave me my first lessons in seamanship, and I shall never forget them. You must come and dine with us to-morrow, and I shall introduce you as my friend, Captain Bowse."

"No, sir — no, pray don't do so," answered the mariner; "I've served on board a man-of-war, and I know my place and rank better. Captains of king's ships, if you please, sir, — but masters of merchantmen. I know the difference between a collier and a seventy-four, I think. But I'll dine with your mess, sir, with much pleasure, if I don't go to sea to-morrow."

"We shall expect you, then, if we see the Zodiac still in the harbour," said Raby. "I see you've got a spy-glass there, let me take a squint at her. You carry six guns, I observe; and I must say I like the look of your craft."

"Very necessary, too, in the places to which we trade," answered the master. "Those Greek chaps among the islands don't scruple to plunder any vessels they may find unarmed, particularly in these times; but the truth is, two of those are quakers — their look is much worse than their bite. However, between this and Cephalonia there's no danger."

"Why, you know, if any pirates attacked you, and were caught, you'd have the satisfaction of having them strung up by King Tom, like those chaps yonder," said Raby. "By the bye, Duff, did you ever observe King Tom's Rubber of Whist?"

"No," answered Duff. "What do you mean?"

"Take that glass, and look at the outer bastion of Port Ricasoli. What do you see there?"

"Four figures, which are hanging by their necks from gibbets," answered

Duff. “What are they?”

“Those are four Englishmen, — at least, one, by the way, was a Yankee, their master, — who turned pirates, and tried to scuttle another English brig, and to drown the people. It’s too long a story to tell you now. But old King Tom got hold of them, and treated them as you see.”

“That fellow, Delano, the Yankee master, was a terrible villain,” observed Captain Bowse, shuddering. “It was not the first black deed of the sort he had done, either. One doesn’t know what punishment is bad enough for such scoundrels. It’s a hundredfold worse when such-like acts are done by our countrymen, than when Greeks or Moors do them, because one does not expect anything better from their hands. But I see, sir, you are casting an eye at one of those strange-looking native crafts standing in for the land with the sea breeze.”

Raby had the telescope at his eye, and he was pointing it towards a sail which was rapidly approaching the shore. So broad and lofty was the canvass, that the hull looked like the small car of a balloon, in comparison to it, as if just gliding over the surface of the blue and unruffled sea.

The view both up and down the harbour, and in every direction, was very interesting. Directly facing them was Port Ricasoli, with its tiers of guns threatening any invader, and the black, wave-washed rocks at its base. A little to the right, in a sort of bay between it and Port Saint Angelo, appeared the white and elegant buildings of the Naval Hospital; and further on, towering upwards from the water, the last-mentioned fort, with its numerous rows of heavy guns, having behind it the Dockyard creek, or Galley harbour, where, in the days of yore, the far-famed galleys of the knights were drawn up, and secure from attack. On either side were white stone walls and buttresses, glittering in the sunshine; overhead a sky of intense blueness; and below, a mirror-like expanse of waters, reflecting the same cerulean hue, on which floated innumerable crafts, of all shapes, sizes, and rigs, from the proud line-of-battle ship which had triumphantly borne the flag of England through the battle and the breeze, to the little caique with its great big eyes in its bow and strange-shaped stem and high outlandish stern, filled with its swarthy, skirmish crew of vociferating natives. Among the merchantmen, the ensigns of all nations might be seen — the stars and stripes of Uncle Sam’s freedom-loving people alongside the black lowering eagle of Russia; the cross of the Christian Greek, and the crescent of the infidel Turk; there was the banner of the Pope, and of Sardinia, and of various other Italian States; but outnumbering them all, by far, was the red flag of Britain. Far out to the eastward, where the sky and sea formed the horizon, there was a slight, gauze-like, whitish haze, through which could be seen the lofty canvas of several vessels, rising, as it were, like spirits from the watery deep, and just catching the rays of the sun declining in the opposite direction, which gave an unusual brilliancy to their wide-spread sails. But the craft which most attracted the attention of our friends was the one Raby had been looking at.

He pointed her out to his brother midshipman, and handed him the telescope.

"What do you think of her?" he asked. "She is a rum one to look at, isn't she?"

Duff burst into a fit of laughter.

"Why, if the fellows haven't set their jib right between the long poking yards of their foresail and mainsail," he exclaimed, "I never did see such an odd rig as that before. What in the world is she?"

"That's what they call a speronara in these parts, sir," answered Bowse; "but you'll see rummer rigs than that before long, when you go up the Archipelago. You see that wide spread of canvass is made by crossing her two latine sails, and setting their jib as a topsail between them. They can lower that down, and haul their wind in an instant. These sails, to my mind, are very good where light airs and smooth seas prevail, though they would not answer in our northern latitudes; and they require a good many more people to handle them than we could spare for the work. They reef their canvas, not like fore-and-aft sails in general, by the foot, but by the leach along to the yard. There's no doubt, however, though they have an outlandish look, that they sail well on a wind, and not badly before it, too, as we see by the craft below us there."

Onward gracefully glided the speronara — such is the name given to the craft which ply between Malta and Sicily with goods and passengers, and from some port in the latter island she seemed to have come, from the direction in which she appeared. On she came very rapidly, considering the light breeze; she was evidently a very fast craft of her class. She came abreast of Fort Saint Elmo, and soon after took in her outlandish topsail, as Duff called, just before she passed close under the spot where our friends were posted, so that they could look directly down on her deck. She seemed to be full of men habited in the long blue caps and striped shirt of Mediterranean mariners, with light-blue trowsers, and a red sash round the waist. She was of considerable size, and, what is unusual with craft of her description, she was decked fore-and-aft, though her between-decks must have been inconveniently low. There was a place sunk aft where stood the helmsman holding his long tiller, and on either side were arranged, ready for use, several long sweeps; but the wind was at present sufficient to impel the vessel along without their aid. Thus much was seen as she ran up the harbour. She passed close to the Zodiac, the mate of which, by his gestures, seemed to be speaking to the crew, and scolding them for the risk they ran of getting foul of her, and they then appeared to be uncertain where to bring up. At last she crossed over to the Ione, and finally rounding to, took in her foresail, and dropped her anchor off the custom-house.

The midshipmen and their companion soon got tired of looking down upon the harbour. Captain Bowse was obliged to part from them, as he had business to transact; and they finally agreed, as they had still a couple of hours of daylight, to hire a couple of horses of old Salvatore, in the Palace-square, and to take a gallop into the country, as a preparation for a grand ball which was to

take place that evening at the Auberge de Provence, and where Raby promised Jemmy Duff he would point him out Miss Garden. Away hurried the two happy youngsters, without casting another thought on the speronara. I, however, particularly wish my readers not to forget her, and also to remember the man-of-war brig, and the merchantman, as both are destined to play a conspicuous part in the following narrative.

Chapter Two.

The speronara would, on a near inspection by a nautical eye, appear somewhat different to the general run of vessels of her rig and build. There was evidently the greatest attention paid to her ropes, spars, and oars. They were of the best hemp and toughest wood; not a stranded or even worn sheet or halyard was to be seen; every spar was sound, and her canvas was new and strong. Her crew, or those who sent her out of port, seemed to consider that much might depend on her speed and capability of keeping the sea.

If, however, she was employed in carrying passengers between Sicily and Malta, it was very natural that her owners should make her appear as seaworthy as possible, to induce people to trust their lives and property in her. We will suppose her still outside the port, soon after Jack Raby and his companions first saw her. Evidently the most important person on board was a young man of very pleasing exterior. He was rather tall than otherwise, and though slight, possessed a breadth of chest which gave promise of great strength and activity. His complexion was sunburnt, if not dark by nature, and his lip, which betokened scorn and firmness, and gave an unattractive expression to his countenance, was shaded by a thick curling moustache. His features were decidedly regular and handsome; and had they been otherwise, his large, flashing, dark eye would have challenged observation. His age was probably about two or three-and-thirty — he might have been younger — and he was certainly a very remarkable person. Those who saw him even but for a moment, went away fancying that they had been long acquainted with his features. His costume at once betrayed his nation; for he wore the red fez, the embroidered jacket and full white kilt, and richly-worked leggings and slippers of the Greek, and the cast of his countenance made one also conclude that he belonged to that nation. The only other person on board dressed in the Greek costume, was evidently some years younger, and was neither so tall nor so strongly built as his companion. His countenance was decidedly handsome, and what would be called aristocratic. It was very grave, and, indeed, melancholy in the extreme; and an accurate observer of character might have divined, from the form of his mouth and expression of his eyes, that he was sadly in want of firmness and decision in his actions, which idea, probably, would not have been very far from the truth. His dress, though the materials were good, was as plain as the costume he wore would allow; but it could not be otherwise than elegant and handsome, and it sat well upon his graceful figure.

Those two persons were earnestly engaged in conversation with another, who appeared to be the master of the vessel, and they were standing leaning over the side, away from the rest of the people on board.

“Remember, now,” observed the principal Greek to the master, “you are to be ready to weigh and make sail at a moment’s notice; it may be to-night, even

— it may be tomorrow or on the following day — I cannot say, but you must be prepared."

"Signor, si," answered the master in a tone of deep respect. "I will take care to obey your commands to the letter; but I am afraid there may be some difficulty with the authorities at the custom-house. They once suspected me of smuggling, though I was as innocent as the babe unborn, and they may detain me."

"You know the consequences," returned the Greek, with a fierce look; "I will listen to no excuse if anything miscarries, so look to it!"

"It is a dangerous expedition you go on, signore," observed the Sicilian master.

"Dangerous!" exclaimed the Greek, in a tone of contempt. "Danger is the food we live on, the air we breathe; without it life would lose half its zest. I'll tell you what, my friend, he is but a base-born slave who knows not how to live, and fears to die. Give me a life of activity and excitement, and when that ceases death will be welcome."

"You, signore, are the best judge of your own taste," answered the Sicilian; "for my part, I am content to make an honest livelihood by trading between my native city of Syracuse and yonder good port of Valetta, where, please the holy saints, we shall drop our anchor in the course of ten minutes."

"And anything else by which you may turn a colonna," muttered the Greek.

The speronara continued in her course, and as she came off Fort Ricasoli, the other person habited as a Greek, who had not hitherto spoken, observed the four figures suspended on the southern bastion.

"Holy Virgin, what are those?" he exclaimed in Italian.

"Those, signore," answered the padrone, as the master of the speronara was called, with particular emphasis, "are pirates."

"Pirates!" ejaculated the young man, while a shudder ran through his frame.

"Si, signore, pirates," answered the padrone, with a significant look. "They had a short life of it after they had committed the acts for which they were condemned. They had reached Smyrna with their booty, when they were captured by the British and brought back here."

"An awful lesson to others to be more careful how they manage affairs," observed the principal Greek, laughing. "Now, I dare say, if the truth was known, those fellows blundered terribly. It's always the case when people get into the clutches of the law."

The other Greek shuddered and turned his head aside. "It is not a pleasant sight," he observed.

"Oh! those English are terrible fellows for punishing those engaged in any little transaction of that sort," said the padrone. "They are good people, though."

"They are remarkably conceited," said the Greek, twirling his moustache — "they believe that they can make the whole world obey them; but it is time that we should look about us. Ah! steer near that merchant-brig there, in the mouth

of the harbour, I should like to have a look at her that I might know her again."

The man at the helm put it so much to port, that the end of one of the long tapering yards of the speronara nearly got foul of the Zodiac's fore-yard.

"What the deuce are you lubbers about, that you cannot keep yourself clear of your neighbours?" sung out Bowse's mate, from the main rigging. "I'll teach you better manners if I catch you at sea, that's all."

"The Englishman seems angry," said the Greek, laughing. "That brig, though, looks as if she had a valuable cargo on board. I must learn more about her."

Conversation was now put a stop to, in consequence of the caution necessary for steering into a thickly-crowded harbour, and the hurry of bringing up.

She dropped her anchor among a number of similarly-rigged craft, close inshore, where she lay exciting little or no observation, except that a few boatmen saw her, and were calculating their prospects of having to transport her passengers or merchandise to the landing-place.

As soon as her sails were stowed, which was speedily done, the health-boat came alongside, and as it appeared she had come from Sicily, pratique was immediately given her. She was next visited by the custom-house boat. The officer, for some reason or other, seemed to consider that there was something suspicious about her, for he examined her papers very minutely, and read them over more than once, but was at last obliged to pass them as correct. The vessel next underwent a strict search, but nothing contraband was found on board her, and at last he took his departure, even then casting back a look of doubt at her, as if he was not thoroughly convinced that all was right.

During these proceedings the Greek sat in the after part of the vessel, maintaining a perfect silence, while he played with the handle of a short poniard which he wore in his sash.

"You appear to be suspected, my friend," he observed to the master, as soon as the officers had gone.

"So it seems, signore," he answered. "The fact is, once upon a time, I had a few bales of goods on board, which I contrived to land without paying the duties, and I have ever since been watched as if I were a smuggler."

"It was clumsy in you to be discovered," observed the Greek. "In the present instance I might find it inconvenient."

A man in a small boat, who had been paddling quietly at a little distance from the speronara, as soon as the government officials had left her, darted alongside.

"Ah! Signor Sandro, welcome back to Malta," he exclaimed, addressing the master of the little vessel. "I have not seen you here for a long time."

"Not the less welcome I hope, Manuel," said the master.

"Few are who remember their friends and pay well," said the boatman. "How can I best serve you, signore?"

"By landing my passengers, and giving them all the information they may

require," said the master. "Hark you, Manuel — put your head nearer — my boy's life is answerable for their safety — so, as you love me, take care that they get into no trouble. They seek a passage to some part of their own country on board a merchantman, and have come here to look for one to suit them."

"I understand clearly, signor," said the boatman, significantly. "But who are they? What is their calling, or occupation?"

"Oh! mother of Heaven, don't ask me!" answered the padrone, with a terrified look. "They may overhear you. It is not my business to put questions to them. It is enough that they pay well, and do not wish to be known. Besides, they would not scruple to cut my throat if they were offended — and most assuredly their friends would string up my poor boy, if anything went wrong with them. Even now, look at the captain — I mean the best dressed of the two. How he is playing with the hilt of his dagger there. He is meditating sticking it into my ribs because I am talking so long to you. I tell you, you must watch over their safety; and, in the name of the saints, aid them to get away as fast as possible — for, till they are out of the place, I shall not feel my head secure on my shoulders."

"Oh! I understand. They are political offenders disguised as Greeks, who do not wish their movements to be known;" said the sharp-witted boatman, jumping at a conclusion. "I'll undertake to serve you and them — not forgetting myself — and, I trust, that they will make it worth my while."

"No fear of that," the padrone was saying, when the Greek's voice summoned him aft.

"What were you saying to the boatman?" he asked in an angry tone.

"I was making arrangements with him to take you on shore, signor, and do your bidding," was the answer.

"Well, he may land me at once," said the Greek. "Paolo, do you remain on board till I send for you, and let not a man quit the vessel on any excuse," he whispered. "Such provisions as they require, the boatman can bring off for them, and I will manage to make him faithful."

The Greek, without further remarks, swung himself over the side of the vessel and took his seat in Manuel's boat.

"Hist, Manuel," he said, in the lingua Franca, well understood by the Maltese boatmen; "you are debating in your mind whether you will inform the authorities that a suspicious character has landed on the island, and get a reward from them, or whether you will take the chance of pocketing what my generosity may induce me to bestow. Now, mark me, my honest friend. In the first place, I could get you hung for a little transaction, of which you know."

The boatman started, and looked round with a suspicious glance.

"Que diavolo, who can this be?" he muttered.

"In the second, remember the English do not detain a man on bare suspicions, and but shabbily reward an informer. On the other hand, twenty colonati are yours, if you do my bidding. I do not want an answer — you are not a fool. Now row on shore as fast as you can."

The Greek was a judge of character; and he seemed not to be altogether unacquainted with Manuel, the boatman. The boat ran into the public landing-place, and he stepped on shore with an independent and fearless air, where he mingled among the busy and motley throng who crowded the quay. The boatman, Manuel, sat in his boat a little distance from the shore, watching him, and ready, apparently, to obey his orders when he should be required.

The Greek proceeded onward through the lower parts of the town, eyeing those he passed with a quick keen glance, which seemed to read their very thoughts. People were too much accustomed to see the varied costumes of the East to regard him with unusual curiosity, or to incommode him in his progress by stopping to stare at him; at the same time that many remarked him as he slowly sauntered on and wondered whence he had come. He seemed to have nothing more to do than to amuse himself by viewing the city, though he had certainly not selected the most interesting or cleanest quarter. He apparently was a stranger to the place, by the way in which he hesitated at each crossing, which turning he should take, till he had carefully deciphered the name on the wall. Now he stopped to look into a shop, then to gaze up at the windows of a house as if he expected to see some one there, and then to throw a copper to some importunate beggar. He walked with an air of so much independence and nonchalance, indeed, at times, almost of haughtiness, that it was difficult to suppose he had the slightest apprehension of danger. Not a person, however, who, passed him, escaped his scrutiny; and even when he appeared to stop carelessly, or for the sake of considering the way he was to take, he cast a hurried glance behind him to satisfy himself that no one was acting the spy on his movements. He had evidently seen enough to convince him that the vessel, in which he had come, was in bad odour, and he naturally concluded that her passengers would be narrowly watched. Of the crowds who passed, not a human being seemed to know him, and if he was in reality particularly observed, it was done so cleverly and so cautiously, that with all his ingenuity, he failed to discover whether such was the case or not. He had already traversed a number of streets — ascending several flights of steps and descending others — when, at the corner of a narrow lane, his eye fell on a squalid-looking beggar who was lustily calling on the passers-by, in the name of all the saints, to preserve him from starvation. A broad-brimmed hat with a crown similar to those worn by Italian bandits, but sadly battered and brown with age and dirt, was worn slouchingly on his head, so as almost to hide his features, which were further concealed by a handkerchief tied under his chin, and a black patch over one of his eyes. A tattered cloak, the cast-off finery of a dandy of the palmy days of the old Knights of Malta, covered his shoulders, as did, in part, his legs, a pair of blue cloth trousers, through which his knees obtruded, and which were fringed with torn stripes at the feet. Such of his features as were visible were as ill-favoured as well could be. His voice, too, had a peculiarly disagreeable tone, as in the lingua Franca of the Maltese mendicants he begged for alms.

This interesting personage was supporting himself carelessly on a pair of

crutches, while he rested on one foot, and stretched forth the palm of his right hand to grasp whatever might be put into it. The Greek stopped and put his hand into his pocket to draw out a piece of money, while he did so narrowly eyeing the beggar. The man's voice changed instantly that he saw the stranger looking at him; from a half whining yet impudent tone, it began to sink and tremble with alarm, and finally he became perfectly mute and forgetful of his calling.

"I thought you would know me," said the Greek. "And you must remember I never forget those I have once seen either as friends or foes."

"No, signor, I perceive you do not," replied the beggar, trembling with alarm. "Have mercy on me."

"That depends upon yourself," said the stranger. "At present, you deserve no mercy at my hands; but I will now give you an opportunity of serving me; and if you do so faithfully, I will overlook the past."

"You are very generous, signor — you always were," exclaimed the beggar, trying to fall down and embrace his knees, which the Greek prevented. "I will go to any part of the world. I will go through fire and water to serve you."

"You have not to go far to perform my directions; but I want faithfulness in the discharge of the duty I shall impose on you," said the Greek, sternly. "And, mark me, Giacomo — if you play me false, as you have done others, I will find you out, and finish your worthless life with as little compunction as I would that of a rabid dog."

"Si, signor capitan, I very well know that you are not a man to be trifled with," answered the beggar, bowing his head.

"Tell me what you want, and by the Holy Virgin and all the saints in heaven I will perform the work faithfully."

"Your oath is superfluous, as you would break it for a copper-piece, so don't insult me with it," replied the Greek, scornfully. "But, listen: there is a certain Jew — Aaron Bannech by name — his office — his den — the place where he cheats, and robs, and lies, is beneath the Albergo — in the Strada. Do you hear?"

"Si, signor, si, — I know the place — I know the man," said the beggar, hastily.

"You know him; it is well that you should — you are an admirable pair. He would sell his soul for a dollar, and would then try to cheat the devil out of it. You are a meaner knave. Half that sum would buy you. You both are useful to me, though. Hasten to him, and tell him that I am here. Say that he must clear out his den of visitors, clerks, or other prying knaves, and that I will be with him in half an hour. When you have done this, go down to the port, and learn what vessels are about to sail, shortly, for the eastward, with all particulars about them — their cargoes — armed force — and number of men — also what ships are expected to arrive shortly from the same quarter. Having gleaned this information, which you well know how to do, come up with it to the residence of the Jew. Listen, also, if anything is said about the Speronara Volante, from

Syracuse, by which I arrived. Alessandro is her master — or, if any remarks are made respecting me. I am, probably, unnoticed; but it is as well to be cautious."

"I will strictly obey your directions, signor," said the beggar. "Have you further orders?"

"No — you may go. I have been talking to you too long already, and may have been observed."

"Rest assured of my fidelity," said the beggar, hobbling off up the street on his crutches, at a far more rapid rate than he was generally wont to move.

No sooner, however, had he got out of sight of the Greek, than he slackened his pace.

"Now, I wonder what I should get by denouncing him to the authorities," he muttered to himself. "They are stingy in rewarding informers though, and he, probably, will pay better; besides, as he says, he may get me hung by a word; and if I get him into trouble, some of his friends are certain to avenge him. After all, too, he would probably make his story good, and I should not be believed. You can never catch those Greeks asleep; their wit is so keen, and they twist, and turn, and double in such a manner, that if they get into a scrape, they are certain of working their way out of it. No, it won't do. I must keep to my word, and be honest with him. Curse him! Here am I a beggar on crutches, and a far greater rogue lords it over me as if he were a prince."

So the beggar hobbled on towards the house of the Jew to fulfil his mission. I am afraid that there are too many people in the world like Giacomo, the Maltese beggar, who are honest as long only as it suits their purpose.

Chapter Three.

The Greek, little dreaming of the danger to which he was exposed, or, at all events, little fearing it, turned on his heel, and retraced his steps for some part of the distance he had come. His air was more buoyant and independent than before.

"So much for business," he muttered. "And now for amusement. We'll try what this brave city can afford. Let me see, I passed a tratoria or a caffè but just now; I'll look in there, and learn what is going forward!"

He soon reached the place he spoke of; and throwing open the folding-doors at the entrance, entered with his usual careless air, and took his seat at a marble table, which chanced to be unoccupied. There was a billiard-table in the room beyond, and upstairs were more secret apartments, where games of chance were, at times, played.

The place was full of persons of all descriptions. English and Maltese, and others of various nations. Those belonging to the army and navy, were either of inferior rank, or were harum-scarum fellows, who cared not at all with whom they associated. There were, also, masters and mates of merchantmen, Frenchmen and Italians; and there was a representative, indeed, to be found of almost all the people dwelling on the shores of the Mediterranean, as also, of more distant nations. Some were smoking, and others drinking; but the greater number were idling about, laughing and talking, as if they had come there to kill time; and when, by chance, any pause occurred, the noise of the billiard balls was heard, and the cry of the marker from the next room. The Greek seemed to excite less observation even here than in the street, except from two or three of his countrymen, who were in the room, and who eyed him narrowly. He rose and sauntered into the billiard-room, perhaps to avoid their scrutiny, perhaps simply to amuse himself by looking on at the game. He soon, however, returned, and ordering some coffee, he took up a Maltese newspaper, which appeared to afford him considerable interest.

"Ah! here we have a complete list of all the vessels about to sail from this port," he muttered to himself. "It will serve to compare with old Bannech's and Giacomo's account," and taking out a pocket-book he quickly copied the list. "And let me see," he continued. "What have we here? A ball to-night at the Auberge de Provence. By Saint Genario; it will be a good amusement to go there. I shall pick up not a little useful information of what is going forward in the great world, what way the wheel is next to turn, and how those English are going to act with regard to Greece, — whether we are to have a loan or an army to assist us. Heaven defend us from the latter, and afford us good pickings from the first. But, with regard to this ball. A stranger, I suppose, would not be admitted without an introduction. They are, I know, of old, very suspicious in this place. Well, I must make old Bannech settle that matter also for me. He

must forge some good introductions, if he cannot procure them for me in any other way. He is well able to do so, for he keeps his hand in at the work, and knows everybody here and elsewhere."

While he sat meditating and sipping his coffee, the three Greeks, at another table, continued eyeing him narrowly, and, at the same time, whispering among themselves. If he was conscious that their glances were fixed on him, he stood the scrutiny admirably, without the slightest change of colour, nor did his eye quail in the least. Looking suddenly up, however, he appeared first to discover that their eyes were turned towards him. Immediately rising, with a bland smile, he walked up to them.

"You seem to know me, gentlemen," he observed, with a courteous tone, in pure Romaic. "Unfortunately, I do not enjoy the same happiness. Will you inform me where it was we met?"

"Pardon, sir, for our rudeness," answered one of the three, rather abashed. "We mistook you for another person — we were trying to recollect where we had seen you."

"It is not impossible that you may have met me before, if you have been in Italy, in which country I have resided for some years; or lately in Sicily," answered the Greek. "In the fair city of Valetta you could not have seen me, as I only landed an hour ago from the last-mentioned island, and in our native Greece, I have not been since the days of my early boyhood, though I am on the very point of returning thither."

"Then, clearly, we are mistaken," replied another of the three. "We, ourselves, arrived here only yesterday from Greece, after encountering numerous hardships and dangers. Among others, when off the southern end of Cerigo, our vessel was boarded by a rascally pirate, manned, too, by our own countrymen, who robbed us of everything we possessed, which they could carry off, and we fully believe they would have sunk the ship, and murdered us, had not a British man-of-war hove in sight, and made them sheer off before they had completed their work."

"I dare say they would," replied the Greek, quietly. "Such gentry, I have heard, generally consider that the only safe plan of avoiding detection, and the troublesome affair of a trial, and perhaps a very disagreeable result, is to stop the mouths of those they plunder beneath the waves, lest they should afterwards tell inconvenient tales of them. If they thought you had escaped, they would take very good care another time not to commit such a blunder."

"Why, it was certainly from no leniency on the part of the villains that we were not drowned, for they had bored holes in our ship's bottom, and thought we should have sunk at once; but, fortunately, a fresh breeze brought up the man-of-war alongside of us before we went down, and her people stopped the leak, and saw us safely into port."

"I regret to hear this account you give me," said the stranger, in a sympathising tone; "though I congratulate you on your narrow escape, — I may call it miraculous. You are far more fortunate than the generality of people who

fall into the hands of those gentry, I should think. I was in hopes that our countrymen, since the commencement of the glorious struggle to throw off the foul Turkish yoke, had abandoned all their malpractices, and had joined heart and hand in the great cause against the common enemy. I, too, am personally interested; as I am about to embark on board some merchant vessel for the East and may fare as badly as you have done, if not worse. Do you know any particulars of the pirate who attacked you? I should like to learn all about him, that we may, if possible, avoid the vessel if we see her at a distance."

"It was dark when she boarded us, so that we had not an opportunity of scrutinising her near," answered the person addressed, who was evidently, by his costume and appearance, a Greek merchant, and, as it afterwards appeared, the two younger men with him were his sons. "Our misfortune happened in this way. We sailed, you must know, on board a Neapolitan brigantine from Athens, bound to Syracuse. The first part of our voyage was performed in safety; but when some ten miles or so to the south of Cerigo, we lay becalmed the whole day. Our captain and the mariners set to work to pray to those accursed little images they call their saints, for a breeze; and, at last, it came; but to prove what sort of characters their saints are, at the same time appeared in the north east, a large polacca brig, of a very rakish look, stealing round the east end of the island. The stranger brought the wind up with her, and, as she neared us, the captain, who had been eyeing her earnestly, grew into a state of great trepidation, and began to pray harder than ever; but this time his saints would not listen to him. He wrung his hands, and beat his breast, and said that the stranger had a very suspicious look, and that he did not like it at all. After stamping on the deck, and weeping, and tearing his hair for some time, in which he was imitated by most of his crew, he bethought himself of getting more sail on his craft, and of trying to escape from the enemy, if enemy she were. A wild boar might as well try to outstrip the fleet hunter. The stranger came up with us hand over hand; our only hope of getting away from him was in the coming darkness. At last the seamen managed to set all the sail the vessel could carry, and, with the wind right aft, we began to glide through the water. On, however, came the stranger after us; if we wished to get away, he did not intend that we should do so, and all of a sudden he yawed to port, and let fly a bow chaser right at us; the shot did not hit us, but it frightened our captain excessively — for it flew directly over our heads. I verily believe, if we had not stopped him, he would have let fly everything, and waited patiently to be robbed and murdered. We caught hold of him, and urged him to be calm, and that we might yet have a chance of escaping. The breeze freshened, and we held on, and, though the stranger still continued to overhaul us, he did not come up so fast as at first. Every instant, too, it was growing dark; and as there was no moon shining, we hoped, by hauling our wind, to slip away from him, if we could contrive to run on without being hit till darkness had completely set in. He, however, seemed in a hurry, and again yawing, let fly another shot at us; though his gunnery was not particularly good — for he again missed us — it had

the effect of setting the Neapolitan master and his crew dancing like madmen; they leaped and jumped, and twisted and turned, and tore their hair, and prayed and swore, all in the same breath. They prayed for themselves, and swore at their enemies, and at their own hard fate should they be taken; for they all had a venture on board, I believe. Though two shots had missed, it was not to be expected that all should have such ill-luck, and accordingly, when the brig yawed a third time and fired, down came our fore-topsail by the run. If the crew had been in a fright before, when they were not hit, it must be supposed that they were now in a complete paroxysm of terror; their first impulse was to let fly all the tacks and sheets, and to jam down the helm, so as to let the vessel fly up into the wind; their next was to rush below to put on their best clothes, and the very little money they had in their pockets, and then to fall to again at praying and beating their breasts. Cowardly fools that they were; had they held on like men, as matters turned out, we should have escaped being plundered at all. In ten minutes after the last shot had created such confusion on board, a boat pulled alongside, and a dozen fellows in Greek dresses jumped over the bulwarks down upon our decks. We three, my sons and I, sat aft as dignified as Turks, and as all the crew were below, there was not the slightest show of resistance. Our countrymen — for such I am sorry to say they were — seemed inclined to be civil to us, but vowed they would punish the Neapolitans for making them expend the three shots, and they forthwith began plundering the vessel; and hauling out the master from his berth, into which he had crept, they made him point out whatever was most valuable on board — brightening his wits up every now and then with a rope's end. How the poor fellow did howl! but he deserved it; for he was an arrant coward. The leader of the pirates who boarded us was a very polite young man: he told us, that he should be sorry to be under the necessity of cutting our throats, or of otherwise sending us out of the world; but that he was afraid he should be compelled to do so, except we would consent to come on board his vessel, where he would make us take the vow of secrecy, and re-land us in Greece. He told us that he was in earnest, and would give us till the last moment to consider on the subject before he quitted the vessel. By this we concluded that he intended to murder all hands in cold blood, or to sink the brigantine. It is very extraordinary, and I hope that you will pardon me the remark, but he bore a very striking resemblance to you, except that he looked younger, and it was this circumstance that first attracted our attention to you."

The Greek stranger who had been standing against the wall, with his arms folded and his legs crossed in an easy attitude during this narrative, at different parts indulging in a slight smile, now laughed outright. "An extraordinary coincidence as you say, my friend, though I confess that I would rather not bear so striking a resemblance to the cut-throat gentleman you describe. The consequences at times might be unpleasant; and I trust that no relative of mine — no younger brother nor cousin, has turned his hand to so disreputable an occupation. Men of the first families, it is true, have become pirates, especially

in these disordered times; but they usually make war only against their natural enemies, the Turks or Moors. I cannot solve the mystery; however, I am very interested in your tale — pray go on with it."

"Before I say another word, I must entreat your pardon for the remark I just made," said the Greek merchant; "I was compelled to do so to account for our apparent rudeness."

"Oh, certainly, my friend," said the stranger, "I pardon you with all my heart. Nothing was more natural — only I must beg that you will not repeat the observation to any one else. The consequences you know might be unpleasant, as it might create disagreeable suspicions in men's minds as to the rectitude of my character; but pray continue your tale."

It must be remembered that although there were numbers of people within earshot, as this conversation was carried on in the Romaic, none of them understood it, which was, perhaps, fortunate for our stranger friend, as it would certainly have drawn their attention towards him; and if a man happens to be unknown in a place, the slightest shade of suspicion thrown on him, is sufficient to blacken his character to the darkest tint.

The Greek rubbed his red cap off and on his head two or three times to brighten his recollection, and then continued —

"While the pirates were ransacking below, their vessel ran alongside, and our decks were soon crowded with a cut-throat set of fellows, who speedily joined their comrades in the work of plunder, and in transporting everything they considered of value to their own ship. It is extraordinary with what rapidity bales and packages were handed out of one vessel into the other. The rascals must have been well accustomed to the work. Everything was done with the greatest regularity; their young leader directing all their movements. It did not take them a quarter of the time to unload that it had taken to load the vessel. Such discrimination, too, as the villains showed in selecting the most valuable merchandise.

"In the midst of the work, however, a cry was raised that a strange sail was in sight, right to windward, bearing down on us. With all their avidity for booty, the fellows had kept their eyes about them in the dark. Their leader sprang on board his own vessel to have a clearer view. He was convinced that the strange vessel was an enemy to him at all events, though a friend to us; and calm and collected as if he was enjoying a game of play, he issued his orders. The first was to tell his people to quit the brigantine, and to make sail on the brig. The second, part of which I heard, made my heart sink within me, and my blood run cold. He did not seem to think it had reached our ears, — indeed, I believe he had forgotten all about us; the words were, —

"'Sink her — drown the people. No help for it — patience; we should otherwise be suspected.'

"Directly afterwards, several men with carpenters' instruments for boring holes, went below, and quickly returning, knocked our boat to pieces, and jumped on board their own vessel. As soon as all the pirates had quitted us, the

brig sheered off. Just as she did so, I heard some one exclaim —

"'Our countrymen, our dear compatriots, where are they? We have forgotten them.' However, I don't think their regret for us could have been very great, for the next moment they fired a broadside slap into our hull, between wind and water, to try to make us sink the faster; and, making all sail, stood away from us as fast as a rattling breeze would carry them. Two of the crew had been knocked on the head by the pirates, and their broadside killed two more. The master and the survivors were utterly incapacitated from helping themselves; so we three Greeks, with the black cook, feeling some wish to preserve our lives, rigged the pumps which had escaped destruction, and set to work to keep the water from gaining enough on her to send us to the bottom. This we found we could easily do; and the cook, going below, was able to plug several of the holes, which had been very imperfectly bored. Some of the crew, also, at last recovered their senses and assisted us in our labours; so that we continued to keep the craft afloat till the vessel, which had frightened away the pirates, came up to us. She proved to be the British brig-of-war, the Cockroach, and a boat immediately came on board to learn what all the firing was about. Our condition proved the truth of our story; and we entreated the officer who boarded us not to desert us, as the sacrifice of our lives would have been the inevitable consequence; whereas, the improbabilities of his catching the pirate were very great. The British are a very humane people, I will say that for them; and the captain of the brig accordingly sent two boats' crews on board us, with the carpenter and his crew, and they plugged the holes, and thrummed a sail, and got it under our bottom. Some manned the pumps, to which they quickly drove the Neapolitans with a rope's end; and next morning we made sail for Zante, which we reached in safety, escorted by our preservers, who immediately afterwards started again in search of the pirate."

"Did they fall in with him, do you know?" asked the Greek, carelessly.

"Can you catch a sunbeam?" said the first speaker. "She must be a fast craft to come up with him. They say nothing can catch him."

"What, then, you learnt who your friend was?" said the stranger.

"Oh, yes! we heard a good deal about him in Zante. He is the very terror of all honest, quiet-going traders in those parts."

"And who is this formidable, light-heeled gentleman, may I ask?" said the stranger.

"No other than that daring devil, Zappa," said the merchant. "You have heard of him, doubtless?"

"I think I have somewhere heard his name mentioned," said the stranger. "But has he already established so terrific a name for himself? You described him as very young."

"Ay, but old in crime. A man who murders all his captives, and sinks every ship he plunders, soon gets his name up in the world. It is one of the various methods to gain notoriety. Each man to his taste."

"You are right, my friend," said the stranger, stretching out his arms and

yawning; “there are many methods by which a man may gain an elevated position; and your friend, Signor Zappa, as you call him, seems to have chosen a very certain one, at least, if he falls into the hands of the governor of this island; who, judging from the specimens I saw hanging up at the entrance of the port, treats such gentry with no slight distinction, by placing them in the most conspicuous posts within his jurisdiction.”

“You joke merrily on the subject; but it is no laughing matter to those who have been robbed and nearly murdered,” said the Greek merchant. “I only wish I could get the villains in my power, I would hang them all without mercy, as high as Haman.”

“I dare say you do,” said the stranger, smiling. “Such is but a natural impulse. Yet, as I have not suffered, I cannot enter quite so warmly into your feelings. However, I am grateful to you for your account; and I shall take very good care to keep out of the way of your friend Zappa. May I ask, by the way, the appearance and name of the vessel commanded by this renowned cut-throat?”

“Certainly,” said the merchant, “though, as I said, it was nearly dark when he boarded us; but I should describe her as a rakish polacca brig, of about two hundred and fifty tons burden; and from what we learnt afterwards, we discovered that she must be the celebrated Sea Hawk. It is said that she is so fleet that nothing could ever catch her, and that she comes up with everything she chases; so that, my friend, you may not avoid her quite so easily as you may wish.”

“It is something to know what she is like; and, if we cannot run from her, we must fight her,” returned the stranger. “However, before we part, let me assure you that I shall be most happy to be of any service to you in my power. When do you again sail from hence?”

“In a few days our mission here will be concluded. We then return to our beloved Greece,” replied the merchant.

“What! and run the risk of being chased by the Sea Hawk, and of falling into the hands of that rogue, Zappa!” exclaimed the stranger. “However, as, by the law of chances, you could scarcely encounter him twice, I should much like to accompany you, for I should then consider myself safe from him. By what vessel do you go?”

“A Venetian merchant schooner, the Floriana. She sails hence in four days; and, as she has a rich cargo, she is well-armed and has plenty of men — so we need not fear Zappa or any other pirate.”

“Just as I should wish. I will look out for her, depend on it,” exclaimed the stranger, quickly. “But I must, for the present, wish you farewell, gentlemen. I have an appointment, and I have already overstayed my time.”

Saying this, the stranger bowed to his new acquaintance; and throwing down his reckoning with a haughty air, quitted the coffee-house.

“He seems an honestly fair spoken gentleman,” said one of the young Greeks to his father. “He will be a great addition to our society on board.”

“I am not quite so certain of that,” replied the more sagacious merchant. “Fair spoken he is without doubt; but for honesty, why you know the safe rule is to look upon all men as knaves till you find them otherwise. Therefore, my sons, never consider a stranger honest, or you may discover, when too late, that he is a rogue. Now, though it is doubtless fancy, I cannot help thinking that our friend there bears a very striking resemblance to the pirate Zappa.”

Chapter Four.

There is an old saying, that, “Give a dog a bad name, it is sure to stick by him.” On this account I suppose it is that Jews are always considered rogues. I am very far from saying that they really are so invariably, or even generally. On the contrary, I believe that there are a great number of very honest, generous, kind-hearted, hard-working people among them in all countries where they enjoy the privileges of free men.

That, in those times and countries where they have been treated as worse than slaves, despised, insulted, and robbed on every occasion, they should have become, what they are often described as being, is not only not surprising, but is according to the laws which govern mankind. Tyranny and wrong, invariably make the people, who submit to them, grow mean, treacherous, and false. Cut off from all honourable pursuits, they have recourse to such as are within their power; and thus the Jews, who were unable to hold even land in their possession, became the money-makers; and, consequently, moneylenders of the world — and, as they were frequently pillaged and deprived by extortion of their wealth, they naturally endeavoured to regain, by every means left to them, that of which they had been robbed.

Now, though there are many Jews whose upright conduct is sufficient to retrieve the characters of their whole people, such cannot be said for the old Maltese Jew, Aaron Bannech. He was a rogue ingrain. To lie, cheat, and rob, where he could do so without risk of detection, was his occupation and delight. Lying, cheating, and robbery, were in him a second nature. He considered them not only lawful, but praiseworthy employments. He could not help lying and cheating if he tried. By so doing, he had heaped up hoards of wealth — he had raised himself from abject penury, and how could he be expected to persuade his conscience, or what stood him in place of one, that he had not been acting rightly. True his gold was of no real use to him — he had no one to enjoy it with him — he had no relative to whom he could leave it. Some might say that it would serve to repurchase Judea for his people; but he cared no more for Judea than he did for Home. He would not have parted with a sixpence to rebuild Jerusalem, unless he could have got a very large interest for his money — indeed he would probably have required very sufficient security, before he would have consented to part with it. His appearance was far from peculiar or striking as he sat in a dingy underground den, which he appeared to have burrowed out for himself beneath the groaning walls of one of the old mansions of Valetta. He had sharp, ferrety eyes, a hooked nose, and a long, dirty, grey beard; indeed, no difference could be discerned between him and his countrymen employed in selling old clothes in London. He wore a brown cap on his head, anila, long serge overcoat, the colour of which it was impossible to determine; and a pair of slippers, which had once been yellow, but were now

stained with many a varied tinge. The chamber in which he sat was fitted up with a desk, and a table covered with packages of papers and account-books, two high stools, and three or four rickety chairs. He was by himself, waiting in expectation of the arrival of the Greek. The time appointed had already passed, and he was beginning to think that some accident must have occurred to his acquaintance. Ten minutes more elapsed — his suspicions increased.

"Can the myrmidons of the law have got hold of him?" he muttered. "That rascal Giacomo — he may have informed, and will receive the reward which ought to be mine. If I dared, I would secure the prize at once — but then, I suspect, before long, the amount will be increased. Yes, it must be. The fruit is not yet ripe for plucking."

He stopped, either to chuckle at his own wit, or to calculate the sum he might expect for betraying the man who trusted him. His virtuous meditations were interrupted by the entrance of the Greek. His manner was as free and joyous as ever. He addressed the Jew in Italian, with a remarkably pure accent.

"Ah! my dear correspondent — my noble friend — my prince of money-lenders, how fares it with you? Still at the old trade of coining gold, eh? Well, we must all live either by fraud or force; cunning or strength are the weapons put by nature into our hands. To some she gives one; to others the latter: nature is most impartial. To the lion she gives claws and teeth; to the horse his hoofs and fleetness. To a woman, beauty and softness; to a man, strength and courage. She intends all these attributes to be employed. So, friend Bannech, you live by fraud, and I by force. Is it not so?"

"I cannot dispute the correctness of your assertion: for, to say the truth, you have spoken so rapidly, that my poor comprehension could not follow you, noble signor," said the Jew, bending low, and placing a chair for his visitor. "But may I inquire what thus unexpectedly brings you to Malta?"

"Pleasure, Bannech — pleasure, and, perhaps, the hopes of a little profit," said the Greek, laughing. "Now, though I may not just yet tell you what brings me to Malta, I will tell you a little more of my history than you are at present acquainted with. Know, then, most worthy Jew, that I am, by name, Argiri Caramitzo, a patriot Greek chief, or prince, call me, of Graditza. That I have been educated in Italy — that years have passed since I set foot in my native land — and that I am now hastening thither to join in the noble struggle to emancipate Greece from the thraldom of the infidel Turk. I have travelled from that city of learning and piety, Pisa, to Naples, thence to Syracuse; and from that ancient city, I have crossed the sea hither. All this you must remember, Bannech, should you be questioned."

"I will not forget it, most noble prince," said the Jew, bending his head. "I like the story much. It has a probability about it which cannot fail to make it be believed — an essential point too frequently overlooked by bunglers in lying."

"I am glad you like it," observed the Greek, or prince — as we may now call him. He took no notice of the last, not very flattering, observation of the Jew. "But now, Bannech, I wish to know what vessels are sailing hence for Greece, as

I desire, you must remember, to secure a passage by one of them."

The Jew looked at him for a moment, doubting whether he was in earnest.

"Oh, I understand," he said at length. "Why, there are several sailing in the course of a few days, but the one which will best suit your purpose quits the harbour to-morrow. She carries passengers — one of whom an English colonel is said to be rich, so he will doubtless have a store of gold on board. He has a daughter or niece with him, who is reported handsome. If she was, by chance, to fall into the hands of such gentry, as we wot of, she would gain them a large amount for her ransom. The vessel I speak of is the Zodiac, John Bowse, master."

"I passed her as we entered the harbour," remarked the Greek. "I will go on board this very evening. But I wish to know more about her passengers. Could not they be induced to carry a large amount of gold with them? It would be very convenient. Tell me, how can I become acquainted with them?"

The Jew shook his head.

"I do not know how it can be managed. These English people, with their proud manners, do not like making the acquaintance of foreigners of whose history they are ignorant."

"Do not tell me that it cannot be done," exclaimed the Greek impatiently. "I tell you, signor, that you must find means of doing it. Surely a Greek prince would not be refused admittance into the best society of an insignificant island dependency like this."

"There are a great many arrant rogues bearing that title," said the Jew, his eyes twinkling as he spoke. "And among the English here the rank alone does not bear much weight. You should have letters of introduction, and how they are to be procured, I cannot say."

"How they are to be procured! Why, forge them to be sure, my friend," exclaimed the Greek. "Nothing is so easy. Come, come, you are well accustomed to the work, I know."

"Oh, father Abraham, suppose I was to be discovered!" ejaculated the Jew. "My credit would be gone, and I should be completely ruined and undone."

"Oh, no fear of that, while your wits are as keen as at present," said the Greek. "Come, has not the colonel some acquaintance or other in Italy, who would be likely to introduce a distinguished foreigner, his friend, visiting the island, or do you know of some other person to whom a letter of introduction might be addressed?"

The Jew meditated for some time, and if with any other sensation than that of grasping avarice, and all its accompanying hopes and fears, it was with that of admiration for the Greek's daring and versatility of talent. He was thinking of the value of which they might be to himself.

"I have it," he exclaimed. "There is a client of mine, a young spendthrift, who has lived much in Italy, and many of whose acquaintance I know. Stay, I have a letter by me from his friend the Count Montebello of Florence. He shall be your introducer. Do you know him?"

"I know nothing of him," said the Greek, "make me a friend of his friend. It will be safer and will be sufficient."

"Excellent, excellent," exclaimed the Jew, chuckling at the thoughts of the fraud. "You should have been bred a lawyer instead of a sailor, prince. Now, remember, this client of mine is acquainted with Colonel Gauntlett, and is, indeed, a suitor of his niece's, for the sake of the money he expects she will receive from her uncle. You will know how to talk to him."

"Admirable! My plan must prosper. There is a ball, too, I understand to-night, at which I suppose all the principal people in the place will be present, and among them, the colonel, his niece, and my new friend. I must be prepared for the occasion; so, friend Bannech, send for the best tailor in the place forthwith; for it will never do to appear in this barbarian costume."

The Greek having thus fully concocted his plan, overruled all the objections thrown out by the Jew, and, as he was a man of action, he insisted on a tailor being instantly sent for. In ten minutes afterwards the well-known artist Paolo Muhajiar made his appearance, and, though he was somewhat astounded at the shortness of the time allowed him to rig the Greek stranger in a suit of mufti, a show of some broad gold pieces overcame all difficulties, and he promised to set every hand at his establishment on to the work.

Little did the honest Paolo dream, as with a profound bow, he gathered up his measures and patterns, and took his departure, who was the distinguished foreigner for whom he was about to labour. The Greek desiring the Jew to detain the beggar Giacomo till his return, with a triumphant look soon after set out to inspect the good brig the Zodiac.

Argiri Caramitzo was a man who hated inactivity; he was never happy except he was in motion, and never contented unless he had a prospect of change before him. Born in England, he would have been a universal philanthropist or a radical reformer, or an inventor of patent machines, or, in late days, a railroad projector; he would have employed his time in haranguing popular assemblies on the rights of man, and the freedom of religion, and he would have been a loud advocate of the cause of the Poles, and Greeks, and Hungarians; but, as he happened to have been born in Greece, he cared not a jot for the Greeks, and employed his talents, sharpened by use, in making a fortune in the way most clearly open to him, and most suited to his taste.

He now hurried down to the quay, off which he saw Manuel at his post, waiting for his return. He beckoned him to approach, and, taking his seat, ordered him to pull alongside the English brig the Zodiac; he soon stood on her deck, to the no small astonishment of Captain Bowse, who had just before got on board. It may be supposed that they would have had no little difficulty in understanding each other; but there is a lingua Franca used in the Mediterranean, which all mariners, who traverse that sea, very quickly pick up; and, what with that and the aid of signs, they made themselves tolerably intelligible to each other; at all events the Greek learned all he wished to know; even before he had spoken, his quick glance had made him acquainted with the

armament of the vessel, and her probable seaworthy qualities. His foot, too, as he walked aft, happened to strike one of the carronades, the look of which he considered suspicious, and he smiled as he found that it was of wood. He soon made known his object in visiting the ship; he was looking out for a passage to Greece by some vessel shortly to sail thither, and, as the appearance of the Zodiac pleased him, he should like to engage a cabin on board her.

"Cannot, though, receive you on board, sir; sorry for it: but all my accommodation is taken up by an English colonel and his family, and he would not allow anybody else on board, even if it was the Pope himself," answered Captain Bowse.

"But I am not at all particular as to the sort of accommodation you can find for me," urged the Greek. "I have been at sea before, and can rough it as well as any of you mariners."

"No matter, Mr Prince; the colonel would not allow any stranger on board, so, with all the will in the world to serve you, I cannot do it."

"But suppose the colonel should not object, would you then receive me?" asked the stranger.

"That would alter the case, sir, and we would rig you up the best berth we could manage," answered Captain Bowse.

"So far, so good," said the Greek. "About the passage-money we shall not disagree; but tell me of what does your cargo consist? I have the greatest horror of sleeping over gunpowder, or anything likely to explode."

"Oh, we have no gunpowder except a few charges for our guns there; but we have some cases of muskets consigned to a merchant at Cephalonia, and which will, I suspect, soon find their way over to your friends on the main; and we have besides an assortment of hard goods, and of silks and clothes, and cottons, and such things, indeed, as would only be shipped in a sound ship — high up in Lloyd's list, let me tell you, sir. There isn't a finer craft out of London than the Zodiac, and none but a good ship would have weathered the gale we fell in with t'other day, though, as it was, we met with a little damage, which made us put in here to repair."

"I have no doubt of the Zodiac's good qualities, and I hope that I may yet have the satisfaction of proving them," said the Greek, as he stepped over the side. "Adieu, captain; a prosperous voyage whether I sail with you or not."

Chapter Five.

A grand ball was taking place at the Auberge de Provence, in the Strada Reale, at Valetta. All the rank and fashion of the city were assembled. They consisted of the naval, military, and civil officers of the crown stationed there, their wives and daughters; a few English visitors attracted to the island to recruit their health, or to indulge their curiosity; and some foreigners, illustrious and otherwise, who had come there chiefly on the latter account; though a small portion might have been travelling diplomatists or scientific savants. Few ball-rooms could display a larger number of glittering uniforms, both naval, military, and consular; and there was a very fair proportion of beauty among the younger ladies, and diamonds among the dowagers. The soldiers certainly took the lead. They consider that possession is nine parts of the law; and thus as they live in the island, while their naval brethren are merely visitors, they could not help feeling their superiority. Captains of line-of-battle ships and frigates are, of course, however, held in high consideration by the fair sex; but midshipmen were sadly at a discount; and even lieutenants, unless they happened to have handles to their names, or uncles in the ministry, were very little thought of. Such was the case at the time of which I write. I suspect very little alteration has, since then, taken place.

So our two young friends, Jack Raby and Jemmy Duff, seemed to feel as they sauntered into the ball-room, and cast their eyes round in a somewhat unusually bashful manner, in search of any young lady who would deign to bestow a bow on them, and accept them as partners. At last, Jemmy Duff exchanged a nod and a smile with the little Maltese girl who had before attracted him, and he was soon, according to his own fashion, engaged in making desperate love to her, evidently as much to her amusement as to his satisfaction. Poor Raby stood looking on, and could scarcely help feeling jealous at his friend's good fortune; for not a single lady did he know in the room, when a hand was placed on his shoulder. He looked up, and a bright smile irradiated his countenance as he saw who it was.

"What, Raby, don't you intend to show some of these fair ladies how well the Ione lads can kick their heels?"

The speaker was a young, intelligent-looking man, with a complexion which would have been fair, had it not been sunburnt, with thick, light, curling hair. He was strongly but gracefully made, of the ordinary height, and would have been by every one considered good looking; his forehead and mouth were decidedly handsome, the latter expressing great firmness, at the same time a great amiability of disposition. His dress was that of a commander in the navy.

"I can't get a partner, sir," answered the midshipman; "I don't know a lady in the room."

"Oh! we will soon find you one. I must not have my boys thought to be

misanthropic."

"Captain Fleetwood," said a lady near, "can you introduce a partner to my niece?"

"Oh, certainly," answered the officer, seizing Jack Raby by the arm, "allow me to introduce Mr Raby, of her Majesty's brig Ione, who will be happy to dance the next quadrille with you."

The young lady to whom he spoke, smiled, and said she should be very happy; but the aunt made a wry face, and observed that she intended to have asked him to introduce his friend, Major White of the — .

"I hope my young friend, Raby, will do as well. He is a nephew of Lord — ," observed Captain Fleetwood, in a slightly satirical tone. "I will bring up White, in tow, to your ladyship, as soon as I can sight him."

Captain Fleetwood was always more thoroughly nautical in his mode of expression at Malta than in any other place.

"Oh, certainly, I am most happy to know any of your officers, especially a nephew of Lord — , whose brother is a great friend of my husband's cousin."

Captain Fleetwood might have made a rejoinder; but at that moment his eye glanced towards the door, at which was entering a stout, oldish gentleman, in plain clothes, and hanging on his arm, a fair, young, and very pretty and interesting girl. He instantly hurried forward, and claimed her hand for the next dance, which, with one of the sweetest possible smiles, she promised to give him, while the old gentleman, though he nodded to him, evidently regarded him with far from amiable feelings.

The young officer, however, who appeared accustomed to the old man's surly looks, and indifferent to them, remained by her side, and engaged her in an animated conversation. At last her companion lost all patience, and tugging at her arm, he exclaimed, —

"Come along, Ada, we must look for a seat somewhere till the dancing begins, for I cannot undertake to stand on my legs all night. Captain Fleetwood, you will find Miss Garden at the farther end of the room, probably, when you wish to claim her hand for the next quadrille; but as she is soon to commence a long sea voyage, I cannot allow her to fatigue herself by dancing much this evening."

Colonel Gauntlett, for the speaker was the uncle of Ada Garden, said this in a grave, cold tone, sufficient to freeze the heart of any ordinary lover; and, pressing his niece's arm as if to prevent her from escaping, he dragged her through the crowd towards a seat which he found vacant.

"Ada," said the colonel, as he walked on, "I will not have you intimate with any of those sea officers. I cannot bear them, from the highest to the lowest. One of them had the impertinence to interfere between me and a lady to whom I was paying my addresses. By Jove, miss, he carried her off before my eyes. I have hated them ever since, with their easy-going, devil-me-care ways."

"But surely, uncle, you would not make all suffer for the fault of one; and I suppose your rival loved the lady," urged Ada.

“Love her, I suppose he did love her; but he had no business to do so, I tell you. I already looked upon her as my wife!” exclaimed the colonel, stamping down his stick vehemently on the floor, and speaking so loud that several people must have heard him.

“But did the lady confess her affection for you, uncle?” asked his niece.

“Confess her love! — why, ay, no — that is, I never asked her; or, rather, she took it into her head to refuse me altogether.”

Fleetwood was about to follow, but he suddenly stopped.

“It will only enrage the old man, and excite suspicions in his mind. Perhaps he will insult me to get rid of me altogether, — I had better not.”

Ada found herself seated next to Lady Marmion, with whose niece Jack Raby was dancing. Her attention was easily riveted by the praises which her ladyship lavished on Captain Fleetwood, and the secret of her affection, if secret it could be called, was easily penetrated by the astute dame.

“Now, my dear, you know I like him, though I do not like the navy in general. Their coats smell of tar and cockroaches, and their conversation is all about their ships and their adventures at sea and on shore; and then you know they are generally so poor, that it is dangerous to let a girl talk to them. Captain Fleetwood is not very rich, I believe; but then he has prospects, and they should be taken into consideration.”

“I really do not know,” said Ada. “It never occurred to me to calculate the fortunes of the gentlemen with whom I am acquainted.”

“Oh, you will grow more prudent, my dear, some day,” observed her ladyship. “But who can that particularly handsome man be walking this way, with Captain Dunnup? By the way, my dear, I should recommend you to keep that Captain Dunnup at a distance. I gave Jane the same advice, for you know he has entirely run through his property; and they say, besides, that he is completely in the hands of the Jews. Dear me, here he comes with the stranger.”

As she spoke, two gentlemen were advancing towards the spot where she and Ada Garden were sitting. The one she alluded to was a dissipated-looking young man, though with a well-bred air, and rather handsome. The other was decidedly so — indeed, he might well have been considered the handsomest man in the room. There was a noble and independent air, and a free-born grace about him — so all the ladies declared — which would have made him anywhere distinguished. His features were dark, and of the purest classical model; his eyes were large and sparkling, and a long silky black moustache shaded his lip. His costume was simple and correct, from his well-fitting black coat to his trousers, which showed off the shape of his handsome leg, and his silk stockings, and low, well-polished shoes. The most severe critic could not have found the slightest fault with him, except perhaps that his coat shone too much, as if it was just out of the tailor’s hands.

“Permit me to introduce to your ladyship, my friend, Prince Argiri Caramitzo,” said Captain Dunnup, advancing and presenting the stranger, who bowed gracefully.

"And may I, Miss Garden, be allowed to introduce him to you?" he continued. "Although a Greek, he speaks Italian like a native, in which language I know that you, also, are a proficient."

Both ladies bowed their heads, and signified their pleasure in knowing the Prince Caramitzo. He, in his turn, in very pure Italian, expressed his still greater gratification at the honour he enjoyed.

While he was speaking, Dunnup caught Colonel Gauntlett's eye fixed on him, and it occurred to him that he should introduce his friend. He accordingly took him up, and introduced him in form.

"The prince is going eastward, colonel, and as you will probably meet again in the classic land of Greece, if you do not rather journey together, I feel that you should become acquainted."

As Colonel Gauntlett rather liked the look of the stranger, he condescended to be civil to him; but as he did not speak a word of Romaic, and as his Italian was very indifferent, and his French worse, Argiri Caramitzo could scarcely understand what he said. He, however, made a polite speech full of complimentary phrases in return, and then, bowing, went back to talk to the ladies.

The handsome stranger judged that he should more speedily gain all the information he required from the niece, and might afterwards, through her, if he found it requisite, persuade the colonel to do what he desired. He found on his return that Miss Garden had been led out to dance by Captain Fleetwood, so he sat himself down to play the agreeable to Lady Marmion, and to glean from her much which he wished to know about the politics of Valetta, and which she was too happy to impart.

We, however, must follow Captain Fleetwood and Miss Garden. There was no doubt of their being lovers, by the confiding way in which she rested on his arm, and glanced up into his face as he spoke; and the look of proud happiness with which he regarded her, and seemed to defy the world to venture on the experiment of tearing her from him. Everybody observed it but Colonel Gauntlett, and he remained obstinately blind to what had taken place.

"My beloved Ada, this is the last time that I may have an opportunity of speaking to you," said Fleetwood, as, the dance being over, he led her to an open balcony which looked out on the moonlit harbour. "You know how ardently I love you, and that willingly would I sacrifice all the prospect of your uncle's property, if he would give his consent to our union; but I would not urge you to act in opposition to his wishes — yet there is a time when obedience ceases to be a duty, and that time must come when he obstinately refuses to give you to me."

"He will not, he cannot do so, when he knows how dearly, how deeply you love me." She spoke according to the dictates of her own heart; nor was she, however, wrong.

"Then this very night, or to-morrow morning, before you sail, I will ask you from him, and as soon as I pay off the Ione, which I shall probably do in the

course of two months, I will come back and claim you. Shall I do so, dearest?"

"Oh, yes! do, Charles. It is the only way, and, believe me, whatever is the result, I will be faithful to you. While you claim me, I will never marry another."

"I cannot ask more, and yet I could not demand less without contemplating an event which would wring my heart with anguish," exclaimed Fleetwood, pressing her hand to his lips. "I think, however, we may before that time again meet — I expect to be sent to Greece, and shall contrive to visit Cephalonia."

For some time longer the lovers talked on without taking note of its flight, when they were disagreeably interrupted by the voice of the colonel inquiring for Ada.

"Come here, miss," he exclaimed. "Here has been Prince Caramitzo waiting for the last quarter of an hour to lead you out to dance, and you were nowhere to be found — I will not have it." And he looked a black thundercloud at Fleetwood. "Come, Signior Principe, there is your partner ready for you."

The prince, comprehending his meaning more by his action than his words, stepped forward, and, with a profound bow, offered his arm, which Ada, giving a glance of regret at Fleetwood, was obliged to accept. The prince was not a man, it appeared, to allow a lady to feel annoyed in his society. He first paid her a slight and delicate compliment on her beauty, which he introduced in a description of his own countrywomen and the Italians. He told her how much he admired all he had heard of England, and seen of Malta; he drew out her opinion on several subjects, and a little account of her life, and then excited her curiosity about himself.

"But how is it that, being a Greek, you speak Italian so well?" she asked.

This was just what he expected; he wished to tell her his history, but could not volunteer to do so.

"Ah, signora, it is a long story, and would fatigue you; but thus much I may tell you: — You know the misery, the abject slavery to which my beautiful, my noble country was so long subjected beneath the iron despotism of the infidel Turks. Our fathers contrived to live under it, or the present race would not have been born to avenge them. We were rapidly becoming extinct as a nation; our religion languished — our education was totally neglected. My father, however, the late Prince of Graditza, also Argiri Caramitzo, was a man superior to those around him, and determining that I, his eldest son, should have the advantage of a good education, he sent me to the famous university of Pisa, in Tuscany. I there acquired the language of Italy in its purest form; but, unhappily, I almost learned to forget my own country — I formed friendships with those among whom I lived. I not only learned to talk, but to think as an Italian, and I was even ignorant of the gallant struggle which had commenced in Greece. This was owing to the affection of my parents, who, knowing that my disposition would have prompted me instantly to throw myself wherever danger was the greatest, did not inform me of what was taking place, and when they suspected that I must have heard something on the subject, assured me that my presence would be useless, and urged me to remain where I was. Alas! I listened to their well-

meant deceit, till news was brought me that my noble father had been slain in combat with the enemies of our country, and that my mother had died of grief at his loss. Then, indeed, the truth was made known to me, and, rousing myself for action, I hastened to fly to the country, where I felt that the presence of even the meanest of her brave sons was required. Alas! I found that the means of quitting Italy were wanting — I was in debt, and no funds had been transmitted to me. I contrived to exist; for my friends were kind, but innumerable delays occurred before the money I sent for arrived, and I am only now on my way to Greece — my native land, the mother of the arts and sciences, the country of Socrates and Plato, of Alexander and Aristides, the battle-fields of Thermopylae and Marathon. Ah, signora, Greece once contained all that is noble and great, and brave — what she once was, such she will be again — when we, her brave sons, have regenerated her, when we have driven forth the accursed Turk, never more to set his foot upon our sacred shore, except as a slave, and a bondman. Ah, this is the patriot's wish — his dream by night, his hope by day. This is the bond of union which now unites the hearts of our countrymen in one great feeling — a deadly hatred of the Turk — time is coming, and will shortly arrive when Greece, brightly and freshly burnished, will come forth a model of a perfect republic to all the nations of the earth. You are happy, signora, in going to the neighbourhood, that you may watch the progress of the glorious work."

Ada listened, and her cheek glowed with animation, for she was an enthusiast in the cause of the Greeks. She looked at the prince, and thought him a noble patriot.

The Greek intended that she should do so. He was struck by her beauty, and every instant he felt his admiration for her increasing.

A second time she accepted the prince's hand, in preference, however, only to that of Captain Dunnup, and she became the envy of the room, for numberless fair ladies were dying to dance with the handsome prince.

The Greek stranger was accompanied to the ball-room by a young man of very striking appearance, though of a slighter figure, and not as tall as himself. He spoke of him as his particular friend, the Count Montifalcone, who was on his way with him to join those struggling for Grecian independence. His manners were elegant: but he appeared to be very bashful, or diffident; and, at all events, appeared very much disinclined to enter into conversation. The Greek, however, introduced his Italian friend to Miss Garden; and though, at first, he was very much reserved, as he gazed at her animated and lovely countenance, he appeared to gain courage, and warmly entered into conversation on the beauty of his native Italy, and her superiority in works of arts over all other countries. It seemed curious to her that although he was going out to join the Greeks, he should show so little interest, as he appeared to do, on the subject of Greece, her wrongs and prospects. He danced, however, but once with Miss Garden nor did he, during the course of the evening, attempt to gain an introduction to any one else; but continued to watch her, at

a distance, wherever she moved, and was evidently much struck with her beauty.

Many remarked the grave and silent young Italian as he stood, with his arms folded on his breast, endeavouring to conceal himself among the crowd, or leaned, apparently lost in reflection, against the door-post at the entrance to the room, in which she happened to be. His Greek friend seemed so much engaged, that he scarcely noticed him, and though Captain Dunnup exchanged a few words with him occasionally, he spoke to no one else, nor did he seem anxious to do so.

With a glowing cheek and sparkling eye she listened as he advocated, in ardent language, the cause of his native land, and her heart beat with enthusiasm.

"Oh! if I were a man, nothing should prevent me from hurrying to join the sacred ranks of your liberators!" she exclaimed.

"With such an advocate we must succeed," returned the Greek, bowing. "Some of your noble countrymen, it is said, have already joined the patriot force; and, lady, when in the thick of the combat, fighting for Grecian liberty, I shall remember your words, and feel that your prayers are aiding us."

Ada listened to the softly-flowing expressions of the voluble prince, and believed him to be a perfect patriot. Had she known a little more of the world, she might have thought otherwise, and yet, who can say, that while the prince was speaking to her, he did not feel all he expressed. New hopes, feelings, and aspirations rushed into his mind, elevating and purifying it — a glorious future might yet be in store for his country and himself — and while he remained by her side, the force of those sensations continued. It was with unwillingness, and even pain, that he was obliged to yield her up again to Captain Fleetwood, who was naturally on the watch to monopolise her whenever he could. How the prince hated the English Captain — for he soon saw that, though Miss Garden listened to his own honeyed words with pleasure, her heart was in the safe keeping of one whom he, all of a sudden, chose to consider as his rival.

"No matter," he muttered. "I must teach her to forget him."

He sauntered about the room for a short time by himself, paying little attention to the fair ladies who surrounded him, and it must be owned, was sadly indifferent to the charms of most of them. He then sought Colonel Gauntlett, whom he endeavoured to engage in conversation. It was certainly of a peculiar nature, and the meaning was not always clear to either party; but he gleaned much useful information, and suggested many things to the colonel in return. Among other pieces of advice, he recommended him to carry as much gold as he could with him, telling him that he would find it more convenient than bills. He strongly advised him also to keep it in his trunks, as they, in case of shipwreck, would more probably be saved than other things. It is extraordinary how very attentive and full of forethought he was.

The ball was at length over. Jack Raby and Jemmy Duff vowed that they had never enjoyed themselves more in their lives, thanks to their captain's

management; and they had made an agreement to introduce one another to each other's partners, and, at the same time, to puff off each other's wealth and connections, which plan they found answer very satisfactorily.

The Prince Caramitzo, as he threw a sea-cloak over his shoulder in front of the hotel, took the arm of Captain Dunnup, and warmly pressed his hand.

"I have much reason to thank you for your politeness, sir, and shall be glad to welcome you to Greece."

The captain expressed his satisfaction at having been useful to him, and signified the very great probability there was of his shortly having to pay a visit to that country, at all events, of having to leave Malta. They then parted with mutual expressions of esteem.

The Greek then took the arm of his Italian friend, and together they sauntered down the street, every now and then stopping to ascertain whether any person from the ball was watching where they went.

Captain Fleetwood walked to his lodgings in an unusually melancholy humour. He had forebodings of disaster, which even his strong mind could not at once overcome, though he knew they arose from being fatigued and worried.

To-morrow he must take his farewell of his beloved Ada for an indefinite period; for, though he intended to hurry back from England as soon as possible, he knew that numberless events might occur to delay him. He had also ventured to speak to Colonel Gauntlett, for the first time, of his love for his niece; and the reception he had met with from the old gentleman was, as might be expected, most unsatisfactory.

The colonel and Ada were driving home together: she had not spoken, for she could not trust her voice.

"Niece," said the colonel, stamping with his stick at the bottom of the carriage, as if to arouse her, "you were talking and dancing a great deal too much with that young naval man — that Captain Fleetwood — and after what I said to you at the commencement of the evening, I consider such conduct highly reprehensible."

"I confess I spoke to him a great deal this evening," answered the poor girl, in a tremulous voice. "I hoped that you would not blame me, as he said that he would speak to you and explain everything."

"Well, young lady, he did speak to me, and a d — d impertinent thing he said, too. He had the folly — the outrageous, unconscionable folly — to ask me to allow you to marry him!" exclaimed the colonel in a husky voice, again almost driving his stick through the bottom of the carriage. "He had the folly; but I was not fool enough to accede to it — I refused him, young woman. And now, never let me hear his name mentioned again."

With a sad heart Ada placed her head on her pillow, and, with a sadder still, she rose on the following morning to prepare for her voyage.

Chapter Six.

The crew of the Sicilian speronara were busily engaged the whole fore part of the day in discharging the small quantity of cargo, consisting chiefly of corn and other provisions, with which their vessel was laden.

When this was done she immediately cleared out at the custom-house, and without any of her crew having even visited the shore, she got up her anchor, and commenced making sail. The long tapering yard of her foresail was first hoisted, and its folds of white canvas let fall, and when her head paid round, her mainsail was next got on her, and sheeted home. Instead, however, of running out of the harbour, as it at first appeared she was about to do, after she had gone a little distance, just between Fort Saint Angelo and Fort Ricasoli, she hauled her foresail to windward, and hove to. The probable cause of this was soon explained, for a small boat was seen to dart out from beneath the fortifications of Valetta, and to take its way across the harbour towards her, carrying a person in the stern-sheets, wrapped up in a cloak, with a broad-brimmed hat shading his features. The hat may not have been worn for the purpose of disguise, for the rays of the sun, striking down full upon the water, were very ardent, and there was good reason for its being worn to protect him from their fury; but there was not quite so much for the use of the cloak, unless, following the Italian fashion, he carried that also over his shoulders for the same reason. The boat ran alongside the speronara, when the person, whoever he was, stepped out, and the foresail being let draw, the beautiful little craft stood out of the harbour. The boat on its return was found to belong to the boatman Manuel, who, being questioned as to the person he had conveyed on board the speronara, declared that he had not the slightest notion who he was — that he had never before seen his face, and that he could not tell whether he was an Englishman, an Italian, or a Frenchman, but that he thought the former. He said, all he knew was, that he had come down to the shore and engaged his boat, and as he had paid him well for the job, it was not his business to make further inquiries. The general opinion was, that he was some person making his escape from his creditors; but by the time the proper authorities were informed of the supposed fact, and the necessary measures taken to ascertain its truth, the delinquent was far beyond their reach.

The wind was about north-west — there was a nice fresh breeze, and supposing that the speronara was bound for Syracuse, she could, hauling as close to the wind as she was able to do, easily lay her course for that port. Either, however, she was carelessly steered, or she was bound to some port in Italy, for, after hauling round Saint Elmo, she fell off considerably from the wind, and finally, when she might have been supposed to have got beyond the range of observation of those on shore, who were not likely to take much notice of so insignificant a little craft, and of so ordinary a rig, she eased off both her

sheets, and, with the wind on her larboard quarter, indeed, almost astern, ran out into the offing. By this course she crossed in a short time the mouth of the harbour; and though at a considerable distance, she was enabled to watch any vessel coming out.

Her movements, however, were not totally unobserved, for Captain Fleetwood, who had called at the house of Colonel Gauntlett, early in the morning, in the vain hope of seeing Ada, was returning in a disconsolate mood along the ramparts, and meditating in what way his duty should direct him to proceed, when his eye fell on the speronara, hove-to directly below him, Manuel's boat just touching her side.

As he had, like most naval officers, a remarkably good glass in his pocket, he directed it towards the little vessel, and among the people on her deck he fancied that he distinguished the figure of the stranger who had paid so much attention to Ada on the previous evening. Now, as he understood that that gentleman was about to sail immediately for Greece, he was naturally surprised, indeed so unlikely did it appear, that he thought he must be mistaken. Although he was very far from being of a suspicious disposition, yet combining the manner in which the stranger had gone on board, and the doubtful character of the craft herself, he determined to watch her movements.

Another cause also combined to create very extraordinary suspicions in his mind respecting the character of the stranger, who had made his appearance so suddenly in Malta. On his way to Colonel Gauntlett's residence, that morning, he had passed the office of the chief of the harbour police, and on looking in to speak a word with Captain S — , he found him engaged in examining three Greek merchants, who stated that the vessel in which they were making a passage from Athens to Sicily, had been plundered by a well-known pirate of the name of Zappa, and that he had appeared on board their vessel; that they had spoken to him, and that they felt almost confident that they had seen the same person, without any disguise, in a coffee-house in Valetta on the previous evening. They acknowledged, that though at first they had no doubt of his identity, yet that when he came up to them, and entered into conversation, they were staggered in their belief; but that after he had disappeared it again occurred to them with greater force than ever, that he must be the man they at first thought. When convinced of this they immediately set out in the hopes of falling in with him, and with the intention of handing him over to the police; but they were unsuccessful in their search, and when, after many inquiries, they learned before whom they should make their depositions, it was too late in the day to see any one. After sleeping on the subject, they were as strong in their opinion as on the previous night, and the first thing in the morning they had come, they said, to make their statement. Captain S — listened attentively. He told them that he thought they must be mistaken as to the identity of the person, as he could not believe that a pirate would have the audacity to venture into Valetta; particularly just after he had committed a daring act of piracy. The Greeks shrugged their shoulders, but asserted that from what they had heard of

Zappa, they believed him capable of any act of hardihood.

"At all events," observed Captain S — , "I will take your description of the gentleman. Figure tall, features regular, eyes large and animated, hair black, and slight curling moustache — not a bad-looking fellow for a cut-throat, at all events. I will order the police instantly to go in search of him, and if he can be found, of which I have no doubt, we will examine him, and confront him with you; and if he turns out to be Signor Zappa, he will, probably, before many days are over, be hanging up alongside Captain Delano and his shipmates."

The Greeks were satisfied that they were right, and on their retiring, officers were instantly despatched in search of the supposed pirate. The result of their inquiries Captain Fleetwood had not yet learned; but the description given by the Greeks answered so exactly to that of the Prince Argiri Caramitzo, whom he had met at the ball the previous night, that he could not help being struck by it.

"I did not altogether like the style of the fellow," he muttered to himself. "He is good-looking enough, certainly; but there was an impudent, sinister expression about his countenance which one does not observe in that of an honest man. I wonder, too, what right he has to the title of prince. There are some few chiefs in Greece, who call themselves princes, but they are very rare. Who they are can easily be ascertained, and I must learn if such a title exists. Let me see, he was introduced, too, by that fellow Dunnup. He is a mauvais sujet I suspect, and I should fight very shy of his friends at all events. What could have taken the gentleman on board that craft then! That puzzles me! I must see to it."

Accordingly when the speronara let draw her foresail, and stood out of the harbour, he retraced his steps along the ramparts towards port Saint Elmo, to a position whence he could command a clear view to seaward.

"She is a pretty lively craft that," he observed to himself, as he saw, with the pleased eye of a seaman, the rapid way in which the vessel glided over the crisp curling waves. "The fellows know how to handle her too; but what is she about now, I wonder? I thought, by the way she first steered, she was bound for Sicily, but there she goes running off to the south-east. I cannot be mistaken." And he took a scrutinising glance at her with his telescope. "Yes, that is her, there can be no doubt about the matter."

Now love makes most men sharp-witted in everything regarding the object of their affection, and Captain Fleetwood was certainly not a man to be less so than any other person.

The sudden change in the course of the speronara had given rise in his mind to sundry suspicions. They were not very serious, and probably, under other circumstances, he would not have entertained them; but he was out of spirits and fatigued, and he could not help connecting the movements of the speronara with the sailing of the Zodiac, on board which vessel Ada and her uncle were that evening to commence their voyage. He did not, however, suppose that a craft of her character would venture to attack an armed brig of the size of the Zodiac, unless she could take her by surprise, nor could she have

any chance of success against so brave and good a seaman as Captain. Bowse, and so fine a crew as his; but at the same time he thought it would be more prudent to let him know what he had seen, and urge him to be on his guard against the speronara.

"I never heard of one of those fellows committing piracy — probably he is up to some smuggling trick — perhaps he expects to fall in with some vessel, and will take her goods out of her during the night, to run them on the Sicilian or Italian coast; perhaps to put that good-looking fellow of a Greek prince, if that is him, on board some craft or other bound eastward. However, I must speak to Bowse about it. I wish to heaven I might sail and convoy the brig; but the admiral would not give me leave if I was to ask him — he would only think it was an excuse to be near Miss Garden."

These thoughts passed through his mind as he hurried down to the quay, where his boat was waiting for him, and jumping into her, he started for the Zodiac. He had made the acquaintance of the honest master, on finding that the colonel and his niece were going by his vessel, and he had been every day on board to assist in arranging Ada's cabin, and to suggest many little alterations which might conduce to her comfort and convenience.

Captain Bowse was on board with every preparation made for sailing, and only awaited the arrival of his passengers. The master of the Zodiac heard the account given by the naval officer without any alarm, though at the same time he owned that there was some cause for suspicion; and he promised to keep a sharp look-out, and to take all the precaution in his power to prevent being surprised. When he heard that the Greek stranger had gone on board the speronara, he remembered the visit of a personage answering his description, on the previous evening, to his vessel, and he felt glad that he had not been induced to take him.

"The chances are, if the fellow be a rogue, that he saw that there would be no use trying to do anything with the Zodiac and he has gone to lay his plots against some other craft," he observed. "That's my view of the case, sir, and I don't think that you need at all alarm yourself about the safety of your friends. But although we are safe ourselves, that is no reason that we should not think of others; and if I was you, sir, I would make inquiries about the strange gentleman, and give notice to the authorities of what you have observed. You can tell, sir, of his wanting to take a passage to Greece, on board here, and then shipping off suddenly in a Sicilian craft. There may be nothing in it; but there may be something; and to my mind it's as well never to trust to a rope with a strand gone."

Wishing a prosperous voyage to the master, and again cautioning him to be careful, Captain Fleetwood stepped into his gig, and had got some little distance, when he saw a large boat approaching, which he divined contained her he loved best on earth, with her uncle and his attendants. How could he resist the temptation of seeing and speaking to her once more? so, giving his boat a sweep, he pulled round to the other side of the Zodiac, from that on

which the gangway ladder was shipped, and lay on his oars, trusting to the chance of seeing Ada on deck, while her uncle was below.

There were fewer packages than most families travel with, for the colonel was a martinet, and would allow none of his womankind, as he called them, to have more traps than was absolutely necessary; and thus no time was lost in getting the party and their goods on board. Besides the colonel and his niece, there was a little Maltese girl, as an attendant, and the colonel's own man, Mitchell, who, like his master, was a character not unworthy of note. Bowse, who understood pretty well the state of affairs, soon contrived to get the colonel below, while he detained Ada on deck, and then pointing out Captain Fleetwood's boat to her, beckoned him on board. He was much too judicious to show in any other way that he was aware of the feelings of the parties; but leaving them together, he rejoined the colonel in the cabin, determined to keep him there as long as he could, showing him the arrangements made for his convenience. Little did the old gentleman think, that when praising many of them, he was indebted for them to the man for whom he had conceived so hearty an aversion. What the lovers said need not be told. Those few moments were sweet but sad, and both felt that they would on no account have missed them. Ada again assured him that nothing should induce her to give him up, and he repeated his promise to hasten and claim her in spite of all opposition. The appearance of Bowse's honest face up the companion-ladder was the signal for him to tear himself away from her, and he had just time to get over the side, when the colonel appeared on deck.

"What are you gazing at there, missie?" he asked, as he saw her, soon after, looking up the harbour. "Oh, ay, thinking of your partners at the ball, I suppose." She did not answer; but as she turned her face with a reproachful look at her uncle, her eyes were full of tears.

As soon as Bowse came on deck, he gave the signal to weigh. The cable was already hove short, the topsails were loose. The men went about the work with alacrity, and in a style very different to that of merchant seamen in general. They were all prime hands, mostly old men-of-war's men turned adrift, as ships were paid off, and had all before served with Bowse.

He carried on the duty, therefore, as far as circumstances would allow, in the fashion to which they had been accustomed, and to which they willingly submitted. The brig was consequently looked upon as as fine a vessel as any sailing out of the port of London. To the cheery sound of the pipe, they manned the capstan bars, and singing in chorus to a merry strain, away they ran swiftly round. A hand was sent to the helm, and the mate was on the forecastle.

"Heave and away," he sung out, as the cable appearing up and down showed that the anchor was under the forefoot. As the wind blew out of the harbour, the jib and fore-topmast-staysail were now hoisted to cast her. With renewed exertions the crew hove round, and the shout they uttered gave the signal that they had dragged the anchor from the bottom. The bow of the vessel feeling the power of her head sails, now paid slowly off.

"Heave and in sight," the mate next sung out, as the anchor appeared above water. Another turn ran it up to the bows. The foretopsail was next sheeted home and hoisted, and the head yards braced forward to help her round more quickly. In the meantime the anchor was catted and fished ready for sea, and as the wind came abaft the beam, the head yards were squared, and the fore-clew-garnets being let run, the ponderous folds of the foresail were allowed to fall towards the deck, just as the wind was brought right aft. Both sheets were then hauled aft, and the increasing breeze no longer finding escape beneath it, blew it out in a graceful swell which made it appear as if it were about to lift the vessel bodily out of the water to carry her gliding over the waves. The fore-topmast-staysail, no longer being of use, was hauled down, and her fore-topgallantsail and royal, with the after sail, were next set, followed by studden-sails on either side, till the brig presented the appearance of a tall tower of white canvas shining brightly in the rays of the sun, which was setting directly astern, and which threw on them, in confused lines of tracery-work, the shadows of the masts, their respective shrouds and running rigging.

Ada, who would not be persuaded by her uncle to go below, as he said, to get her out of harm's way, looked on with deep interest at these proceedings, and with admiration at the method by which, in so short a time, so beautiful a fabric could be raised. Ada delighted in everything connected with the sea. She was a sailor's daughter, and she loved a sailor; but even before she had known Captain Fleetwood she felt an affection for things nautical, and certainly he had done much to increase her regard. She enjoyed too the physical pleasures of the sea, the fresh free breeze, and the light dancing wave, which to her was a source of no inconvenience. While others suffered, she was on deck enjoying existence to the full. It is true that she had as yet only seen the ocean in its summer dress, and except from the experience of a short gale, which she looked upon rather as giving a zest to the pleasure of a voyage, she knew little of its wintry tempests, its dangers and horrors. Bowse observed the interest she took in all that was going forward, and, like a true sailor, felt as much gratified as if she was his own daughter, and under his especial protection. Jack, the cabin-boy, was coiling away a rope near him, and beckoning to him, he sent him down for a comfortable chair, which, on its appearance, he placed before her.

"There, miss," he observed, "I think you will be able, more at your ease, to sit and look at the little island we are leaving behind us. It's always a pleasure to take the last look at the place we are going from."

Ada thanked him with a sweet smile for the chair which he had judiciously placed on the starboard side of the poop, and looking partly aft, so that she could command a full view of the harbour, where the Ione lay, and of the fortifications of Valetta. The Zodiac was now running out between forts Saint Elmo and Ricasoli; and as she cleared the former, she felt the wind drawing rather more to the northward. Her yards were, therefore, braced forward, and her mainsail hauled out; and now with the wind on her quarter, a point in which every sail a square-rigged vessel can carry draws best, with a fine rattling

breeze she rapidly left the shores of Malta astern.

Chapter Seven.

Never did a vessel leave port under more propitious circumstances than did the Zodiac, with a fair, steady breeze, a smooth sea, and at a time of the year when there was every prospect of the continuance of fine weather.

As Bowse walked the deck with a spy-glass under his arm in man-of-war fashion, a smile of contentment lit up his honest countenance, and glistened in his eye; and as he felt the freshening breeze fanning his cheek, and lifting his vessel, as it were, he began to laugh at his momentary suspicions about the character of the speronara and her crew. Every now and then he would stop in his walk, and would look over the side to judge how fast the vessel was going through the water, or he would examine the compasses to assure himself that they were true, or he would cast his eye aloft to see how his sails drew, or his clear, full voice would be heard issuing some necessary order for the government of the ship.

Even Colonel Gauntlett could not help expressing his satisfaction at the propitious commencement of their voyage, as he stopped in his short and otherwise silent walk on the poop to address a few words to the master.

Ada sat silently in her chair, gazing on the fast-receding shore; and it is not surprising that her thoughts were fixed on him who was, she felt sure, even then watching, from its most extreme point, the bark which bore her away. Her little Maltese maid, Marianna, stood by her side with tears in her bright eyes, and gazing her last for an indefinite time on the land of her birth, and where all her affections were centred, except those which had lately arisen for her young mistress.

The colonel's man, not knowing exactly where he ought to be, being too dignified, at first, to mix with the men forward, and astonished and confused at manoeuvres which he could not comprehend, as is generally the case with his class, always managed to get exactly where he was most in the way.

"Port a little, you may, my son," said the master to the man at the helm; "steady, so, keep her. East-and-by-north is the course," pronouncing the north with a strong emphasis on the O, and without the R — as if it were spelt Nothe. "Just get a gentle pull on our weather-braces, Mr Timmins," to the mate. "The wind's drawing a little more aft again. We're making her walk along, sir," to the colonel. "She's not going less than six knots an hour, I'll warrant, which, with this light wind, is not bad for a craft of her build — she's no clipper, I own, sir. Heave the log here. I dare say you'll like to be certain, miss," turning to Ada, as he thought the operation would amuse her.

The second mate and two hands came aft with the log-line and reel. Bowse took a half-minute glass from the binnacle, and watching till all the sand had run into one end, held it up before him. The seamen, meantime, held the reel up before him, so as to allow it to turn easily in his hands, and the mate, taking

the little triangular bit of wood, called the log-ship, adjusted the peg, and drew off, with a peculiar jerk of his left hand, several coils of the stray-line, which he held for a moment over the quarter of the vessel, till he saw that his chief was ready with the glass, and he then hove it over into the water. The first part of the line is called the stray-line, and its object is to allow the log-ship to settle properly in the water, as well as to take it clear of the eddy. As soon as this part had run out, a cloth mark ran through the mate's fingers. "Turn," he exclaimed. "Turn," repeated the master, and turned the glass. The marks rapidly passed through the mate's hand, as he jerked the line of the reel, always keeping it at a stretch.

"Stop," sung out Bowse, as the sand had run out of the upper end of the glass.

"Done," said the mate, and stopped the line.

He had not to count the knots run off, for his experienced eye was able to tell the number by the mark on the line. It must be understood that this line is divided into a certain number of equal parts, each of which bears the same proportion to a mile, which thirty seconds do to an hour, and therefore, as the log-ship remains stationary in the water, according to the number of these proportions dragged through, while the sand is running, so is shown how many miles or knots the vessel is going through the water.

"Six and a quarter," exclaimed the mate. "That's what I call good going for a ship with a full cargo, in a breeze like this."

"That's what we call heaving the log, Miss Garden," said the master, who had been explaining the use of the log, though in not quite so succinct a way as I have attempted to do. "You'll be able to turn the glass another time, I'm sure."

The glass runs, in reality, only for twenty-eight seconds, as two are considered to be employed in turning it.

Ada, who enjoyed an advantage over the reader, by having the operation performed before her eyes, answered that she clearly understood it, and would always, in future, hold the glass.

"By this calculation, you see, miss, as it is just two hours since we passed Fort Saint Elmo, we have run exactly twelve knots and a half off the reel; though we didn't go through the water so fast at first, as we are now doing. However, by the look of the land, I calculate we are not much less than that off it. You see we call miles — knots, miss, on account of the knots which are marked on the line. When we can just see the last of some conspicuous point, we shall take its bearing by compass and its distance, and then I shall commence pricking the ship's course off on the chart, and that is what we call taking our departure. Now you see there's many people on shore would fancy that when we left the port we took our departure; but the ties which bind a seaman to the shore, and to those we leave behind, are not so quickly parted as they may think, you see, miss." And the honest master, chuckling at one of the first attempts at wit and gallantry of which he had ever been guilty, thought the next instant he blushed at his own audacity.

"It's surprising, miss, what funny mistakes them who never leave the land make about seafaring concerns; but then, what can you expect of them? they know no better," he added, in a tone showing the deep commiseration he felt for the ignorance of landsmen. "To say that they don't know the stem from the stern, isn't to say anything. They know nothing about a ship, how she's built, how she sails, or what she's like. The last voyage I made I had a passenger on board who was a cleverish sort of gentleman, too, and for talking politics he'd go on for an hour; yet he wanted to know why I couldn't bring the ship to an anchor right out in the Bay of Biscay; and one night, when it was blowing a stiffish gale, with a heavy sea running, he roused me out of my sleep to ask me to send a better hand to the helm; one who knew how to keep the craft steady, or else to run into some harbour till the morning. He never could get it out of his head that he was not in the Thames. Now, miss, I see that you are not one of those sort of people, and that you will soon know all about a ship, though you may not just yet be able to act the captain. To-morrow I'll show you how to shoot the sun, as we tell greenhorns we are doing, when we take an observation with the quadrant. It's a very pretty instrument, and you will be pleased to know how to use it."

"I shall like very much to learn all you can teach me, Captain Bowse," answered Ada, making a great effort to rouse herself from the feeling of sadness which oppressed her. "I wonder how mariners managed to traverse, as they did, the most distant seas, before these instruments were invented."

"They used to trust more to the sun and stars, and to their lead reckoning, than they do now, I suppose, miss," answered the master. "Even now, there's many a man in charge of a vessel who never takes more than a meridional observation, if even that; and having found his latitude, runs down the longitude by dead reckoning. Some even go about to many distant parts entirely by rule of guess, and it is extraordinary how often they hit their point. Now and then, to be sure, they find themselves two or three hundred miles out of their course, and sometimes they get the ship cast away. I have, too, met vessels out in the Atlantic which had entirely lost their reckoning, and had not the slightest notion where they were. Once, I remember, when I belonged to the Harkaway frigate, coming home from the Brazils, we sighted a Spanish man-of-war corvette. When we got up to her we hove to, and an officer came on board who could speak a little English; and you would scarcely believe it, but the first thing he did was to ask us for the latitude and longitude; and he confessed that the only instruments they had on board were out of repair, and, for what I know, the only man who knew how to use them was ill. Our captain then sent an officer on board the corvette, and a pretty condition she was in for a man-of-war. They had a governor of some place as a passenger, and his wife and family, and two or three other ladies and their families; and there they were all lying about the decks in a state of despair, thinking they were never to see land again. They had been a whole month tossing about in every direction, and not knowing how to find the way home. The decks were as dirty as if they had not

been holystoned or swept all that time; not a sail was properly set, not a rope flemished down. If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I could not have believed such a thing possible. Our appearance raised their spirits a little, and they began putting themselves to rights as soon as they had made sail on their course. They kept company with us till we got into the latitude of Cadiz, for their craft sailed very well, for all that they did not know how to handle her, and I believe that they managed to get into port in safety at last."

"I am surprised at what you tell me," observed Miss Garden, "I should have thought the Spaniards could not have so totally forgotten their ancient naval renown as to allow such dreadful ignorance to exist."

"The men are active, intelligent fellows enough, and the officers in the merchant service are, from what I have seen, very good seamen; but since the war, their navy has been much neglected, and men were made officers who did not know the stem from the stern of the ship, just because they happened to be some poor dependent of one of their nobles, or the son of a valet out of place. Things are mending a little now with them, I hear."

"I wonder any but such beggarly fellows as you speak of can be induced to go into the navy at all," said the colonel, who had been listening to the master's story, and was far from pleased at the interest Ada took in what he said. "For my part, I would as soon be a shoe-black; but you seem determined to give my niece a dose of the sea."

"Oh, yes, sir!" answered Bowse, perfectly indifferent to the colonel's ill-temper; "I hope we shall make the young lady a first-rate sailor before long."

"I hope you will do no such thing, Mr Bowse; she thinks a great deal too much about it already," returned the colonel, taking another turn aft.

"Indeed I do not, uncle," replied Ada, as he came back, in a half-playful tone, calculated to disarm his anger. "You must acknowledge that the scene before us is very beautiful and enjoyable. Look at that blue and joyous sea, how the waves leap and curl as if in sport, their crests just fringed with sparkling bubbles of snow-white foam, which, in the freshness of their new-born existence, seem inclined to take wing into the air — then, what can be more bright and clear than the expanse of sky above us, or more pure than the breeze which wafts us along. Look, too, at the blue, misty hills of our dear Malta, just rising from the water. What mere mole-hills those wild rocks now seem. And then that glorious mass of glowing fire which spreads far and wide round the sun as he sinks into that clear outline of sea; and distant though it seems, sends its reflection across the waves even up to the very ship itself. Ah! if one could but secure that orange tinge, one might gaze at it unwearied all day long. See, also, the dark, fantastically-shaped spots on the ocean as the sails of the distant vessels appear between us and the sun, like evil spirits gliding about the ocean to cause shipwrecks and disaster; while again, on the opposite quarter, the canvas appears of snowy whiteness, just catching the last rays of the light-giving orb of day, and we would fain believe them benign beings hovering over the ocean, to protect us poor mortals from the malign influences of their

antagonists; while our proud ship glides majestically along in solitary grandeur, casting indignantly aside the waves which it seems to rule, like some mighty monarch galloping over the broad domains which own him as their lord. Come, uncle, can you deny the correctness of my description? And I am sure Captain Bowse will agree with me."

She laughed playfully at her attempts at a description of the scene surrounding them, and which she had purposely made as long as she could find words to go on with, well-knowing the effect which her own sweet voice exercised in calming the habitual irritation of her uncle.

"A pretty bit of jargon you have managed to string together," said the colonel, looking more amiable than he had before done, "and that is what I suppose you call a poetical description, missie. Well, as it does not convey a bad idea of what we have before our eyes, it must pass for something of the sort, I suppose. What do you say, Mister Bowse?"

Now, although Bowse had not entirely comprehended all that Ada had said, he felt that he was called on to give an answer, and accordingly looked round the horizon, as if to satisfy himself that her description was correct. He had taken a survey of the whole expanse of the sea to the westward, and his eye had gradually swept round to the east, when, instead of turning round to answer, he kept it fixed on a distant spot just seen over the weather or larboard bow. Shifting his position a little, he placed his telescope to his eye, and took a steady gaze.

"That's her, I can't help thinking," he muttered. "But what she wants out there, I can't say."

To the surprise of Ada, he walked forward, and called his mate to his side.

"Here, Mr Timmins, just tell me what you think of that chap out there, over the weather cat-head," he said, giving his officer the glass.

The mate took the instrument, and looked as he was directed.

"She's a lateen-rigged craft standing on a wind athwart our course, sir," answered the mate instantly, as if there was no difficulty in ascertaining thus much.

"That one may see with half an eye, Mr Timmins; but do you see nothing unusual about her?"

"I can't say that I see any difference between her and the craft, which one is always meeting with in these seas," answered the mate. "Her canvas stands well, and looks very white as we see her beam almost on to us. She seems one of those vessels with a name I never could manage to speak, which trade along the coast of Sicily and Italy, and come over to Malta."

"By the way she is standing, she will pass at no great distance to leeward of us, and if she was to haul up a little, she would just about reach us," observed the master in a tone of interrogation.

"Just about it, sir," replied the mate.

"Well, then, Mr Timmins, keep your eye on her, and when we get near her, if there is still light enough left to make her out, tell me if you have ever seen her

before."

The mate, somewhat surprised at the directions his chief had given him, prepared, however, to obey them, and while he superintended the people on deck, he constantly kept his telescope fixed on the stranger. A quarter of an hour or twenty minutes might have passed, when, after taking a longer scrutiny than before, he suddenly turned round, and walked to where his commander was standing.

"I know her, sir," he exclaimed. "She is no other than the craft which nearly ran foul of us yesterday, and which went out of harbour this morning. She had two outlandish-looking chaps as passengers; and one of them came on board in the evening to talk about taking a passage to Greece. I remember him well, sir, though I did not say anything to you."

"You are right, Mr Timmins, it's her, there's no doubt," said Bowse. "We'll give her a wide berth, for there seems to be something suspicious about her," and he mentioned what Captain Fleetwood had said to him. "I don't think the chap would dare to attack us; but, with females on board, it's as well to be cautious. We'll haul up a little by degrees, not to make it remarkable, so as to pass to windward of him, and have the guns loaded and run out, just as a matter of course, in the Mediterranean, tell the people. I don't want to have any talking about it, you know; for it will all be moonshine, I suspect. Look you, too, have the small arms and cutlasses up on deck, just to overhaul them, as it were. The studden-sails must come in, at all events; it won't do to be carrying on at night as if we had fifty hands in a watch instead of five. Now let the people knock off work."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the mate, and, without the slightest appearance of hurry, he set to work to obey his commander's orders.

The crew, who had been employed beyond the usual hour in getting the ship to right, finished stowing away everything that was loose, and got the hatches on over the cargo. One after another the studden-sails, which had been extended beyond the yard-arms came flying down like huge white birds from their lofty perches, the moment the halyards and sheets were let go, and, as they bulged out, they looked as if they were about to sail off before the wind ahead of the vessel. As all hands were wanted for the work, Bowse clapped on himself, petting a rope into even Mitchell's hands, and in a short time the Zodiac, stripped of her wings, was brought under more easy-working canvas. The lee-braces were then flattened in a little, and the helm being put a few strokes to starboard, she headed up towards the north. While the mate was following the other directions he had given, Bowse again brought his glass to bear on the speronara, and, while so doing, his eye was attracted to a sail which appeared in the horizon, and which he at once knew to be a square-rigged vessel. From its height, too, above the water, and its faint outline, he judged her to be a ship or a brig of some size. He had, indeed, remarked her some time before, and it now occurred to him that she had not altered her position since first seen. It would therefore appear that she was standing the same course as

the Zodiac; but as they neared her rapidly, such could scarcely be the case, and he, now seeing that her head was turned towards them, could only come to the conclusion that she was hove to. He calculated, also, that the speronara, supposing that she had, for some time, steered the same course she was now on, must have passed close to her.

The idea came into the master's head more as a matter of speculation than because any further suspicions occurred to him, for the probability of those he still entertained being correct, he thought so very slight, that he was almost vexed with himself for acting on them; and had it not been for his promise to Captain Fleetwood, he most likely would have done so. That the speronara, now to leeward of him, was the self-same craft he had seen in Malta harbour, he could, however, no longer entertain a doubt. He had noted her long, low hull, with overhanging stern and high bow, the great length of her tapering yards, and the way her immense lateen sails stood; there was also a peculiar dark mark on the cloth next to the outer leech of her foresail, near the head of the yard, which was unmistakable, and when he could clearly see that her identity would be proved. As he now brought his glass again to bear on the speronara, he saw that as the Zodiac was brought on a wind, she was immediately hauled close on it, so that, notwithstanding the change he had made in his course, she might still pass, if she liked, even to windward of him, unless she also chose to hug the wind as he had done. On seeing this, the spirit of the British sailor was roused within him.

"Oh, hang it," he muttered. "I'm not going to be altering my course for fear of a rascally Italian piccaroon, if such that fellow should be. If he chooses to come near us, he must take the consequences. We'll show him that we've got some bulldogs on board who can bark pretty well if they like. But I forgot the young lady, and the little Smaitch girl with her. It won't do to let them run any risk of being hurt, should the villains begin by firing into us before they speak, as is the fashion of the cowards. I must manage to get them down below without frightening them."

Having arrived at the conclusion of these cogitations, Bowse approached to where the colonel and his niece were sitting; the young lady employed in gazing on the sea, while he was looking with somewhat an inquiring eye at the preparations carrying on under the mate's superintendence on deck.

"Don't you think the young lady had better go below, out of the way of the damp, sir," began Bowse, puzzled what excuse to make.

"Damp! surely there's none to hurt me," said Ada, looking up somewhat surprised. "It is so refreshing."

"No, miss, the cold — the night air may do you harm," rejoined Bowse.

"I have no fear of either," answered Ada. "It's quite warm, and I do not even require a cloak."

The master was sadly perplexed, and the colonel would not come to his aid; at last he bethought him of a better reason, which must succeed.

"Yes, miss; but you see it's coming on night, and it's a rule that all ladies

should go below at night," he said, in a grave tone.

This made Ada fairly laugh outright.

"Oh! but I intend to break through the rule, I can assure you. The evening, when the moon is playing on the water, is the most delightful time of the twenty-four hours; and you will not persuade me to forego its pleasures."

The colonel at length came to his rescue.

"What is it makes you so anxious for my niece to go below, Mr Bowse?" he asked. "If you have any particular reason, pray mention it, and I am sure she will be most ready to obey your wishes."

"Why, sir," said Bowse, drawing the colonel, who had risen, a little forward, and whispering so as not, he thought, to be heard by Ada; "you see, sir, I don't quite like the look of that craft we are nearing — some murderous work has been done lately in these seas; and I was told, just before we sailed, to be cautious of her — that's all."

"It was for that reason you were loading your guns, and getting up your arms?" exclaimed the colonel, in a less cautious voice than that in which the kind master had spoken. "Very right and proper. I'm glad to see precautions taken. We'll fight the rascals with pleasure."

Ada overheard the words, and coming up, placed her arm on her uncle's.

"What is the matter? — Is there any danger?" she exclaimed, in a pleading tone. "If there is — oh! let me share it with you. Do not send me down into the cabin." She trembled, but it was more with excitement than fear.

"Oh! nonsense, girl — suppose there was any danger, what object could there be in your staying on deck?" answered the colonel. "You couldn't save me from being hurt, missie, and I don't think you would manage to hurt any of the enemy, if there should prove to be one in the case, after all, which is in no way certain yet."

While the colonel was speaking, Bowse again looked at the speronara. He now, to a certainty, ascertained that she had the dark mark in her foresail, and that she was full of men. This at once decided him in urging Miss Garden to go below, and on her still resisting, the colonel gave indubitable signs of anger.

"Come, come, missie, no more nonsense. Go below you must, without further delay, and take your little nigger with you."

Ada pleaded for a few minutes more to see what was likely to happen, but in vain, and was reluctantly compelled, in company with her maid, to go into her cabin, there to await the result of the meeting between the two vessels. Ada did as every right-minded girl, under the circumstances, would do — she knelt in prayer — not through abject fear for her own safety, did she pray, for of herself she thought not; but she prayed that her uncle, and the brave men with him on deck, might be shielded from danger — a danger which it was very natural that from what she had heard she should considerably exaggerate.

Chapter Eight.

If, as is asserted, the pleasures of life consist rather in the anticipation than in the fruition, or perhaps we may say, in the means taken to enjoy them, rather than in the objects when obtained; so, most assuredly, is the anticipation of evil worse than the evil itself; and misfortunes, which appear great and terrible when looked at timidly from a distance, diminish, if they do not altogether disappear, when grappled with manfully.

In fact, as somebody or other observed, once upon a time, that whenever he wrote a philosophical, a beautiful, or a noble sentiment, that fellow, Shakspeare, was sure to have been before him; I might more briefly express what I wanted to say, by quoting our great poet, —

"Cowards die many times before their death."

Now, as neither Bowse, nor his officers or men, were characters of that description, but, on the contrary, as brave fellows as ever looked danger in the face without flinching, they, on their own accounts, cared very little whether the craft in sight was a pirate or an honest trader. But it was now very evident that the speronara had an object in steering, as she was clearly doing, for the brig, and as that object could scarcely be otherwise than hostile, there was a possibility of their being attacked; and with one of those unpremeditated cheers which British seamen cannot refrain from giving at the thoughts of a skirmish, every man hastened to buckle a cutlass to his side. Powder and shot were got up, and the small arms and boarding-pikes were placed by the sides of the guns, ready at hand, to be seized in a moment. The spirit of the veteran soldier was instantly aroused in the bosom of Colonel Gauntlett. As he sniffed the air of battle, the querulous, ill-tempered old gentleman was changed into the cool and gallant officer. As soon as Mitchell understood what was likely to happen, he was seen to dive into the cabin, from whence he soon returned, when going up to his master, he stood before him anticipating his orders.

"Mitchell, my sword and pistols, and bring me some ammunition, too, mark me."

The servant's hand rose to his cap, and turning round, he again descended to the cabin, reappearing in less than half a minute with the weapons. The colonel buckled on his sword with far greater satisfaction than a dandy tries on a new coat, and after carefully loading and priming his pistols, which were of exquisite workmanship, he placed them, with a look of satisfaction, in his belt. Not a word, however, did he say while thus employed. The first observation was to his servant.

"Mitchell," he said, "if that rascally felucca attempts to board us, you are to act as my reserve, remember. We shall have to charge on to her deck, or her people will charge on to ours, and you are to keep close behind me, and support me if I require you."

"Yes, your honour," answered Mitchell, in imitation of his master fastening a cutlass round his waist. "Is it them chaps in the night-caps on board the little boat out there we've to fight?"

"It is, Mitchell, the people in that felucca now approaching us," said the colonel.

"Och, then, by the powers, we'll blow them to blazes with these little darlins alone;" and thereon he pulled forth from his coat-tail pockets a pair of huge horse-pistols, of antique date and prodigious bore, which would almost require a rest from which to fire them.

The sun had set, and the short twilight of that southern latitude was fast disappearing, yet sufficient remained to show the outline of the speronara as the two vessels drew near to each other, though more distant objects had long since been shrouded from sight. Her tapering lateen sails now, as seen in one, appeared like the summit of a lofty pyramid of dark hue, surrounded by the waves. Then, as they approached still nearer, and she was almost abeam, the crew were seen standing up, and watching them with eagerness. Instead, however, of attempting to pass ahead of the brig, as she came near, she kept away so as pass close under her quarter. Now came the anxious time. If she was about to board, she would be alongside in another instant. Bowse, however, felt that whatever might be his suspicions of her honesty, without some more presumptive evidence of evil intentions, it would not do for him to commence hostilities; he therefore, taking his speaking-trumpet in his hand, went aft, and leaned ever the quarter-rail.

The speronara came rapidly on, and was close to.

"I have one message for you," exclaimed a voice from the deck of the stranger, in Italian accents — "send boat here."

"I'll see you d — d first," exclaimed Bowse. "I've no boat to send — send yours," he shouted through his speaking-trumpet.

"Heave to, there — I send boat," was shouted in return from the speronara; and she was immediately seen to hug the wind, her helm was put down, and about she came on the other tack, the same on which the Zodiac was sailing, placing herself thus on their weather quarter.

"Keep her away," shouted Bowse to the man at the helm, thinking that the speronara was about to board him; but immediately he saw he was mistaken, for instead of her fore-sheet being eased off, it was kept to windward, and as she lay hove to he observed preparations to launch a boat into the water. "I suppose, sir, we may let these fellows come on board?" he said, addressing the colonel, who was by his side; "they can do us no harm, and they may possibly have a message."

"As you think fit, Captain Bowse," returned the colonel, who was so pleased with the master's coolness and bearing, that he no longer refused to give him the usual title, — "I've no objection. They can't eat us; and if they meditate running alongside, they will see we are prepared for them."

"Put the helm down, my lad, round in the weather after-braces, and lay the

main-yard square — brace up the head yards — rouse in the main sheet — ease off the head sheets."

These orders being executed, and the brig brought to the wind, she was hove to, with her head in the same direction as that of the speronara. That vessel could just be seen to windward, looking dark against the western sky, and far larger than she really was, slowly forging ahead, while a small boat could just be discerned traversing the intervening space.

"Well, as we are to have no fighting, I suppose, I will just go and relieve the anxiety of my little girl," said the colonel, whose good humour was now in the ascendant.

No sooner did his niece see him than she flew into his arms, and kissed his cheek affectionately — an example Marianna, in the exuberance of her joy at finding there was to be no fighting, was nearly imitating.

"Oh, dear uncle, I am so glad that there is no danger to be encountered. You cannot tell how anxious I have been."

"Well, missie, since you don't like the cabin you shall come on deck and see what next takes place; we are going to have some visitors, it appears." Saying this, he gallantly placed a shawl on her shoulders, and gave his hand to lead her on deck.

While the boat of the speronara was approaching, three or four of the Zodiac's crew were collected by the foremost gun, watching her progress with no little interest. Two of them were regular salts of the old school, who still delighted in ear-rings and pigtails, though, in compliment to the degenerate taste of the times, they wore the latter ornaments much smaller than they had done in their younger days. They were prime seamen, and fellows who were ready to go down with their colours flying rather than strike to an enemy.

"You have heard tell on the Flying Dutchman, of course, Bill," said Jem Marline, casting a look to windward at the speronara, and hitching up his trousers, while he squirted a stream of tobacco-juice through the port.

"On course," answered Bill Rullock, "I haven't been to sea near thirty years without, messmate."

"Did you ever cast eyes on the chap, though?" asked Jem.

"Can't say as how I have," answered Bill. "But there's many they say who has, and few who ever lived to tell of it. But what was you thinking on, Jem?"

"Why you see, Bill," replied his chum, "I don't altogether like the circumbendibus ways of that ere chap to windward. You see, first in Malta harbour, we falls in with him or one like him, for I don't say, mind you, that that ere craft is the same which nearly ran foul on us yesterday; then out he goes right ahead of us, and then just as it's got dark, down he comes again, and wants to send a boat aboard us. Now you see as how that's the thing I don't in no manner of ways approve on. If I was our skipper, I would send a round shot right into the boat, sooner than any of his people should step on this deck. That's just the trick the cursed Dutchman's up to."

"No manner o' doubt about it," said Bill gravely; "but you know, Jem, they

say the Dutchman's cruising ground is off the Cape, in a full-rigged ship, and I never heard on his coming into these parts."

"True as gospel, old shipmate, but how should we know that he hasn't got tired of the Cape, and taken a trip up here?" argued Jem. "And as to the matter of the rig, he may shift his craft according to the sea he's in. Besides, you know as how if there's one Flying Dutchman, there may be two, and this fellow may have come to trouble us here, up the straits. Depend on't, Bill, the less company one keeps with them sort of gentry the better."

"Very true, Jem, but suppose a chap out of that boat then does come on board, what's to happen think ye?" asked Bill, in a tone which showed that he in no way doubted his messmate's account.

"Why I can't say exactly, because as how I never seed what he does; but from what I've heard, I believe he tries to slip a letter like into the skipper's or some 'un's hand who's green enough to take it; and then the chap, who's no better nor Davy Jones himself, gives a loud laugh, and down goes the ship to the bottom, or else a hurricane is sure to get up and drive her ashore. But here comes that cursed felucca's boat. I wish we might just let fly at her; it would save mischief, I'll be sworn."

"Bear a hand there with a rope for the boat coming alongside," sung out the captain in a loud voice, which sounded as ominous of evil to the ears of the superstitious crew. "Bring a lantern here to the gangway," he added. Bowse, with his first mate and Colonel Gauntlett, stood near the gangway, which was lighted up with a lantern to receive the strangers, as a small boat containing in all only four persons, came round under the brig's stern. They pulled only two oars, and two people were seated in the stern sheet. "Keep an eye to windward there, Larkins, on that felucca," said the first mate to the second, as he went to his captain's summons. "I don't altogether think her cut honest."

"A mighty fuss about a very small affair, I suspect," muttered the colonel, as a figure was seen to ascend from the boat up the side of the brig.

The stranger was dressed in the Phrygian cap, and simple garb of a Sicilian mariner. His appearance, as far as it could be judged of by the dim light of the lantern, was anything but prepossessing. A profusion of long, straggling, grizzly locks, once probably of raven hue, which evidently had not felt the barber's scissors for many a year, concealed the greater part of his face which was still further hidden by a patch over one eye, and a handkerchief bound round his head, while his mouth was surrounded by an enormous pair of moustachios, and a beard of similar character, so that little more than the tip of a red nose, and a rolling fierce eye was visible. As he reached the deck, this handsome personage bowed to the group before him, without speaking, while he glanced his eye round at the crew, who still wore their cutlasses, and at the other weapons which were placed ready for use.

Behind the group I have described, stood several of the crew, among whom were Jem Marline, and his chum Bill Bullock, and if the stranger had been able to read the expression of their countenances, he would certainly have been a

bold man, had he not felt some apprehension; for they spoke almost as plainly as words could do, that had they the power, they would, without ceremony, heave him into the sea. There were fear, suspicion, and dislike, strangely blended with the usual bold recklessness which had given a character to their features a sudden emotion could not obliterate. Fortunately, however, the light of the lantern fell in such a way as to throw them, where they stood, into shade.

"What is it you want with us, signor?" said Bowse, in his usual blunt tone, seeing that the other did not speak.

"To carry us all to Davy Jones, if we don't look sharp," muttered Jem Marline to his messmate. "The beggar will be handing a letter directly, and then stand by for squall."

The stranger shook his head, as if not comprehending what was said.

"That's it," whispered Jem, in a tone of terror. "He don't speak. He never does."

Bowse repeated the question, in the lingua Franca of those seas.

The stranger shook his head.

"He does not understand our lingo," observed Bowse. "Here, Timmins, you speak a little Italian — just ask this gentleman what he wants aboard here."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the mate coming forward, and asking the question in execrable Italian.

Again the stranger shook his head, as if not comprehending the question, and finding that not much progress was likely to be made at this rate, he turned round, and leaning through the gangway, beckoned his companion to come on deck. As he drew back, another person appeared, dressed precisely in the same manner; but evidently very much younger. A long moustache shaded his mouth, and wild elf-locks concealed the greater portion of his face, and from a patch down one side of his cheek, he looked as if, like his elder companion, he had been engaged in some severe fighting. The light of the lantern, as he reached the deck, seemed particularly to annoy him, and he stood with his eyes cast on the deck, shading them with one of his hands, nor could he meet the glance of any of those surrounding him.

"What do you wish to explain?" said the second stranger in Italian, bowing with a not ungraceful bend, and a touch of his hand to his cap.

"Oh! you can speak, can you? Well, that's all right," said Timmins. "And now, if you please, tell us why it is the felucca there was so anxious to speak to us?"

"Si, signor," answered the younger stranger, very slowly; and in an Italian which was mostly understood, he then explained that the speronara, of which his father was master, had, that afternoon, fallen in with an Austrian man-of-war brig, which had brought her to, and sent a boat on board her. The officers, he said, informed them that the noted Greek pirate Zappa, in his famous brig the Sea Hawk, had lately been heard of not far from the mouth of the Adriatic, and that he had plundered and destroyed several vessels. The Austrian, he said, had given him despatches for the governor of Malta, relative to the subject, as

also to the Neapolitan Government, with a reward for carrying them, and had charged them to inform all vessels they should fall in with of what had occurred.

"Then he did not tell you to speak us in particular," said Timmins.

"Si, signor, he expressly — oh! no — not you in particular — oh, no," replied the young man.

"Have you nothing further to tell us?" said Timmins. "Because you see, though we are much obliged to you for your information, we are in a hurry to be on our course again, and if you should happen to fall in with the Signor Zappa and his brig the Sea Hawk, just tell him that the Zodiac will give him a warm reception if he attempts to play off any of his tricks upon her."

"You don't know the pirate," exclaimed the young man vehemently, "he — "

"Do you know him?" said Timmins, fixing his eye upon him. The man's glance quailed before that of the stout sailor.

"Oh no, signor, I don't know him — I have heard of him though."

"Oh! is that it?" said the mate, interpreting what he heard to the captain.

"Well, just ask him and his father if they will come down below, and take a glass of something before they shove off," said Bowse.

A few words were exchanged between the two strangers in a low tone, and there appeared to be some hesitation on the part of the elder; but, at last, they consented, and followed the master into an outer cabin, which he had retained as his own, and where he and his mate messed. A door from it opened into the cabins engaged by the colonel, who, when he saw the strangers, retired also with his niece into their cabin.

As the door between the two stood open, all that took place in one could be heard in the other.

"Let the Italians come in here, Mr Bowse," said the colonel, from the inner cabin. "I will give them a glass of sherry which they will like better than rum and water, and it will do them more good than their own thin wash."

When the strangers, who, directed by the signs made by the master, found themselves in the presence of a lady, they stood somewhat abashed, it seemed, and bowed respectfully as they quaffed off the wine offered to them. The bright light which was shed from a lamp hanging from the deck seemed also much to annoy their eyes, long accustomed to darkness, and they kept their faces shaded by their hands during the short time they were in the cabin, so that little or nothing of their feature? could be seen.

For an instant, however, the eyes of the youngest fell on Ada, and, at that moment, there gleamed in them a peculiar expression, which she could not help remarking; but what it meant to say, she was at a loss to comprehend. It was certainly a look of intelligence, as if he expected to be understood; but there was also blended with it an expression of admiration, pity, and regret, which further puzzled her. At all events, she was convinced that, by that look, he intended to convey some meaning, which he dared not otherwise explain.

The strangers remained scarcely a minute below, and respectfully wishing

the occupants of the cabin a good evening, they took their leave. The elder went first, and as the second followed, he appeared to stumble at the door. As he did so, he let a folded paper fall from his hand, and, at the same instant, he gave a hurried glance at Ada over his shoulder. Before she had time to tell him of his loss, he had sprung up the companion-ladder. The strangers were quickly in their boat, which, with rapid strokes, pulled back towards the speronara.

"Up with the helm, my lad," exclaimed the captain, in a hurried tone, to the man at the wheel, as soon as the boat left the side, "haul aft the head sheets — ease off the main sheet; Mr Timmins, we'll keep her on her right course."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the mate — shouting as the brig's head fell off, "square away the head yards, my men; come, be sharp about it."

"And what do you think, Timmins, of those fellows' account of the Austrian brig and the pirate? It seems somewhat strange, doesn't it?" said Bowse, as he walked the deck with his first officer as soon as they had put the ship on her former course. The speronara still lay hove to right astern, her outline every instant becoming more indistinct as the brig ran from her.

"Why, sir," replied the mate, in return to his commander's question. "I don't think any good of it, and that's a fact; but if you ask if I believe it, I don't do that neither. These Italians are much given to lying at best, as far as my experience goes; and I believe we have just heard a pretty round lie, though I don't say there was no truth altogether in it. To my mind, if there is such a chap as that Zap — what do they call him, the pirate — it is much more likely that he is on board that felucca, or perhaps he was one of the fellows who came on board us, than that an Austrian man-of-war brig should have sent her cruising about to give notice of him to English merchantmen."

"Well, Timmins, that's my view of the case," replied Bowse; "I think the Austrian brig would have stood on to Malta herself, seeing she must have been almost in sight of it, instead of sending a craft of that sort with a message. Besides, what business had the speronara there at all?"

"There's something very suspicious about it, at all events," returned the mate. "Now, though I don't often listen to what the men say, Captain Bowse, and they generally get hold of the wrong end of a thing, yet they have often an inkling of what's right and wrong. Well, sir, they've already got all sorts of stories aboard here, about the Flying Dutchman and such-like stuff, and they don't at all like the look of things. When you were below with the strangers, they talked of throwing them crop and heels overboard and letting them swim to their boats, and I believe if you hadn't come up with them on deck yourself, they would not have let me prevent them."

"I believe the people are right, Timmins, in thinking that the two fellows who stood on our deck lately are knaves, but it wouldn't have done to heave them overboard," said the master. "However, they are not likely to do us any harm if we keep a bright look-out, and should any rascally pirate attack us, I'm sure all on board here will stand to their guns like men."

Chapter Nine.

One of the most valuable qualities which a person can possess, is presence of mind. Our safety and our life, and the safety and the lives of others, frequently depend on it. Some people are endued with it naturally — they never act without thought, and they in a moment perceive what is best to be said or done. Others act from impulse, without consideration, and though they may now and then do what is right by chance, they are more likely to do what is wrong; like the Irish seaman, who, when ordered to cut a rope to which he was hanging, cut above his head instead of below his feet, and came down by the run. I believe that it is very possible to attain a presence of mind which one does not naturally possess, by constant practice and attention, though I suspect the task would be found very difficult.

When Ada saw the paper drop from the hand of the young Italian mariner, her first impulse was to call out to him in order to restore it, but the look he gave as he left the cabin, convinced her that he had done so purposely, and feeling that if so, it was certainly of importance, as she did possess the quality of which I was speaking, she sprang forward to secure it. The paper she saw, as she returned to her seat, was the blank leaf of a book, torn hastily out, and folded up in the form of a note; but on opening it there appeared to be nothing written on it.

"Why, what is that you have got there, Ada?" said Colonel Gauntlett.

"Oh, I fancied that I had discovered an important document, and, lo and behold, it turns out to be merely a blank paper," returned the young lady laughing. "One cannot help conjuring up some romantic incident in these lovely seas, and forgetting that in these matter-of-fact days nothing of the sort is likely to occur; but I believe after all there are some pencil marks on the paper." She held it up closer to the light, and as she did so, her countenance grew graver. There were a few lines written in pencil, but so faint that it was not surprising she should, at first, not have remarked them. They were in Italian, and in the peculiar handwriting of the people of that nation.

"Trust not to appearances," they said. "Avoid the polacca brig. The story told you is false." At the bottom were the words, "An unwilling actor," as if intended for a signature. There was nothing more to show by whom they were written, though there could be but little doubt that they were so by the young mariner, or by somebody who had employed him. Ada translated them to her uncle, who was at a loss to comprehend their meaning, further than that they contradicted the story they had just heard from the lips of the very man who dropped the paper. He thought over them for some time, and then summoned Mitchell, whom he directed to request the captain's presence.

Ada was again called to translate them, when the captain appeared.

"And what do you think of them?" the colonel asked him.

"Why, sir, that they serve to confirm my suspicions, and those of my mate, that the felucca is not honest, and that there is a good deal of mystification going on somewhere or other."

"Then you don't believe the story of the Austrian brig having sent the felucca to us?" asked the colonel.

"Not a bit of it, sir; and my firm opinion is, that if the rascals had found us unprepared, she would have been alongside us before now. She had more people on board her than when she left Malta harbour this morning, though where they came from I can't say; and I'm positive as to the craft, though the young man denied having been there for many a day. I can't make it out."

"But what does this paper mean about the polacca brig, think you?" asked the colonel.

Bowse thought for some time.

"I have it, sir!" he at length exclaimed, clapping his hand to his head. "That's the brig those fellows wanted to make us suppose an Austrian man-of-war. If they had taken less trouble we might have been taken in."

"And what do you intend to do, Captain Bowse? Remember I am under your orders, in the way of fighting on board here. If you ever come on shore when there's anything doing, I will show you how we manage things there."

The colonel spoke in a good-natured lively tone, as he always did the moment there appeared a prospect of fighting.

"Keep our guns loaded, and trust to Providence, sir," replied the captain.

"Please, sir, Mr Timmins begs you will just step on deck for a moment," said the steward, putting his head in at the door, and looking at the master.

Bowse jumped up and hurried on deck, for he knew the mate would not have sent for him except on a matter of importance.

"Here, Sims, what's the matter now?" said the colonel, calling the steward from the pantry; "any more visitors?"

"O Lord, no, sir, I hope not," answered Sims, coming forward and showing by the pallor of his countenance, and his trembling hand, that whatever the matter was it had alarmed him.

"What is the matter, then?" exclaimed the colonel. "Out with it."

"Why, sir, they say on deck, that the Flying Dutchman is following us, and that we shall be sure to drive ashore or go to the bottom," answered the steward, almost crying with alarm.

"Fiddle-de-dee, with the Flying Dutchman. What arrant fools the men must be to think of such nonsense," exclaimed the colonel, in a contemptuous tone. "Come, Ada, let us go on deck before you return to your cabin, and we will have a look at the phantom."

Bowse found his mate standing on the poop, looking intently over the weather quarter. He was so absorbed in what he saw, that he was not aware of his commander's presence till the latter touched his arm.

"I thought it was better to send for you, Captain Bowse, for as I'm a living man there is that cursed felucca, instead of going to Malta, following at our

heels, and coming up with us hand over hand."

As the mate spoke, he pointed in the direction towards which he had been looking. Bowse, having just left the bright light of the cabin, could not at first discern anything; but gradually he perceived the dark shadowy outline of the speronara's sails brought into one, and like a phantom gliding over the waves. There could be no manner of doubt that it was she, but the question in his mind was how to treat her. Though he might be almost certain that her intentions were evil, he could not fire into her, till there was no doubt of the matter, and she might be alongside, when the advantage he possessed in having heavy guns, would be much diminished, if not altogether lost. He might, possibly, by making more sail, get away from the speronara; but that he doubted, and the brig was already under as much canvas, as on ordinary occasions, it was considered prudent to carry at night. He remembered that he was not on board a man-of-war, when sail could be shortened, without calling the watch below. Yet sail must be made, as it would never do to have that little speronara buzzing about them all night without being allowed to punish her, or trying to get away from her.

"We must see if we can't walk away from that fellow, Mr Timmins. Turn the hands up," he at length exclaimed, after taking a turn on the poop. "Set the royals. Get the fore topmast, and lower studding-sails on her."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the mate, going somewhat slowly to obey the order. "Little good I'm afraid it will do us, though."

The crew, though expecting to be roused up, for the watch on deck had let those below know of the reappearance of the suspicious stranger, went about their duty without their usual alacrity.

"One might just as well try to run clear of a hurricane as to beat that chap out there either on wind or off it," muttered Jem Marlin, as he went aloft to rig out the studding-sail booms. "All the canvas in store in Portsmouth Dockyard wouldn't carry us away from him, if he wanted to catch us."

The additional sail, however, was set, and as the wind had fallen light, it was only what was required to urge her at her previous speed through the water. While sail was being made the master was joined on the poop by his passengers.

"Well," said the colonel, laughing. "I hear we have the honour of the company of the Flying Dutchman again."

"Dutchman or not, sir," replied the master, "that little speronara has taken it into her head to dodge us; and, shame on the brig, which ought to do better, she seems likely to come up with us."

"Well let her — we are a match for her, I should think; and my little girl here seems rather anxious for a brush. She puts to shame that steward of yours, who came skulking into the cabin just now as white as a sheet, declaring we were going to be boarded by ghosts or hobgoblins of some sort."

"You must humour seamen, or you can never manage them, sir," replied the master. "They as firmly believe in the Flying Dutchman as they do in the

Gospel; and you can't persuade them that he is not to be met with. It would never do for me to go and tell them that they are cowards and credulous fools; and I well know that the same men would face three times their number with cutlasses in their hands."

"And I am sure, uncle, any one might be excused for mistaking that dark object astern of us for a phantom wandering over the face of the deep," said Ada. "Even now, as I look at it, I can scarcely persuade myself that it is the light, graceful speronara we saw during daylight; and am far more inclined to believe it a being from another world — the ghost of one of the old sea-kings one reads of — or, perhaps, a malign spirit stalking over the deep in search of prey.

"Well, miss, the same sort of idea occurs to the mind of the uneducated seaman as he keeps his silent watch at night on the mast-head or forecastle; and when he sees through the darkness tall ships slowly gliding noiselessly over the waters, and when no sign or signal is exchanged, there is nothing to show him to the contrary. I don't mean to say that there are many seamen that would mistake a ship for a ghost, because they would not be worth their salt if they did; but a few may have done so, and have told stories about them which have found plenty of people to believe them, and tell them again."

"That's the way all the wonderful nonsense one hears spoken of has got circulated," said the colonel. "But as I do not see much to interest us in looking at that vessel astern — and there is nothing else visible — I shall go to bed; and you, Miss Ada, must go to your cabin, so take Marianna off with you."

Ada begged to remain a little longer; and, for a short time more, she was allowed to enjoy the fresh air on deck. The night was very fine. The sky was perfectly clear, and the stars shone brightly forth — but there was no moon; and, consequently, her range of vision was much circumscribed. The sea was covered with light waves, which, as they rose and fell, scarcely had any effect in giving motion to the vessel. The hue of the ocean was, in some places, almost of an inky blackness; in others it was lighted up with phosphorescent flashes, which, seen amid the surrounding darkness, seemed as brilliant as if composed of real fire — their reflection being caught by the light foam which curled on the summits of the dancing waves — while, on either side of the vessel, a mass of scintillating sparks flew off as if her stern were ploughing up a vast field with a sub-layer of gold-dust; and astern appeared a line of yet brighter lights composed of thousands of whirling eddies, which grew smaller and smaller, and less distinct, till lost in the distance. After watching the sea for some time, as Ada looked up at the rigging, and at the masts and wide-spread sails above her head, they no longer looked as in the day-time, like white wings extended to urge on the vessel in her course; but, increased to many times their former size, they seemed like a black pyramid to tower upwards to the sky till lost in the distance.

Ada was not long permitted to enjoy this, to her, unusual scene, before her uncle again summoned her below; and this time she was obliged to obey. He, however, had given strict orders to be called should anything occur.

The wind, as the night drew on, grew considerably lighter, and this gave a decided advantage to the speronara, which rapidly came up abeam. Neither Bowse nor his mates had turned in, and even the crew remained on deck, watching the stranger with jealous eyes. It appeared, as they watched her, that she was steering a course a point more to windward than they were, for, as she came up, her distance from them was far greater than they had expected, and it was soon evident that she had no intention of boarding them. Bowse breathed more freely, and looked at the studding-sails. He knew that all hands were weary as he was himself.

"Take in the studding-sails, Timmins, and furl top-gallant sails. The Zodiac can walk along fast enough without them, and we must not have the people roused out again, if we can help it."

The order was obeyed with alacrity, and the brig was soon brought under the snug canvas she usually carried at night.

"I told ye, Bill, there was no manner nor use setting them studsails nor to'gallant sails neither," said Jem Marlin, as, his watch on deck being over, he turned into his hammock at midnight. "Lord bless ye, nothing could have made us run away from her if we'd tried ever so much. But to my mind, it's having that young lady aboard kept him off. Depend on't there's nothing like having a beautiful, virtuous young woman on your side, to keep Davy Jones and all his devils at long range. The fact is, they're afraid of her, she's so different to theirselves. While we, Bill, you knows, is sarcumstantially too much — "

What Jem might have said further, I know not, for his head touched the end of his hammock, and he was fast asleep.

The grey light of the early dawn was just stealing across the sea, and a few faint streaks of reddish tinge showed the eastern part of the sky, when the master of the Zodiac came on deck. His ship was still proudly holding her course unharmed, amid the waste of waters, and with that fresh reviving hour when all the events of the new-born day are yet to occur, the indistinct causes of the alarm of the previous night appeared to have vanished, and even the superstitious seamen could venture to smile at their previous terrors. The wind had fallen considerably, and there was no longer sufficient to crest the tops of the sluggish leaden-like waves which had not yet lost the hue thrown over them by the mantle of night. Gradually, however, the eastern sky assumed a warmer, and yet a warmer tinge, increasing till an orange glow was cast across their surface, the sombre colour gave place to a brighter purple, and as the sun bursting from his ocean confines, took his rapid course upwards, they caught the intense blue of the sky above them, on their changeful bosoms.

The first thing which a sailor does on coming on deck, is to cast his eye aloft, to see what sails are set, and how they stand, and then to sweep it round the horizon; his next is to go aft to the binnacle, and to take a look at the compass.

Bowse quickly satisfied himself that the sails were properly trimmed, and that the ship was steering on her right course; but the survey he took of the horizon did not so well please him. There was in the first place, some odd-

shaped clouds floating along to the south and south-east, just above the sea, which he did not like, and rather to the northward of east, just on the horizon, were two sails, the appearance of which he liked still less. He looked at them attentively, then he rubbed his eyes, and looked at them again; but neither operation satisfied him. He then went to the companion, and taking his spyglass, surveyed the two objects for some time. A landsman would not have remarked them; indeed, he would scarcely have perceived the faint, irregularly shaped dots they appeared, just suspended, as it were, above the horizon; but the well-practised eye of the old sailor could not only discover what were their peculiar rigs, but even which way they were steering. He soon determined, to the satisfaction of his own mind, that the northern-most of the two, and the nearest, was a lateen-rigged craft, standing, close hauled, to the northward, across his course, and that the other was a square-rigged vessel, probably a brig, under easy sail, standing in the same direction that he was. Now, although under ordinary circumstances, he would not have given the two vessels a second thought; yet coupling the events of the previous day, and the mysterious warning they had received, he could not help thinking that one was the speronara; the other the brig with which she was in communication, and which she wished to persuade them was an Austrian man-of-war. Bowse took two or three turns on deck, every now and then casting a glance eastward, expressive of no very amiable feelings.

"Oh! confound the rascals," he muttered, stamping his foot on the deck. "If it wasn't for that sweet young lady below, who should not have her eyes shocked with scenes of blood and fighting, I wish they would both of them come on at once, and have it out, if they want to rob us, instead of sneaking round, and bothering us in this way. If I do get alongside them, I will give it them; but we shall have something else to do before that, I suspect."

He took another turn or so, and then stopped, looking to the northward. He had, at first, intended again setting all the sail the ship would carry before the wind; but on more critically examining the clouds in that quarter, he determined, for the present, to make no change. The clouds, he observed, were increasing in number, and banking up thickly together, and the first freshness of the morning had given way to an oppressive and heavy air, which seemed to weigh down their spirits. The wind, which had hitherto been so steady, though varying in strength, now dropped considerably, and began to veer about, so as to require the hands constantly at the braces. Bowse fully felt the responsibility of the command intrusted to him, and that the safety and lives of his crew and passengers would depend very much on his forethought, judgment, and coolness. He was glad to be alone, to think over what was best to be done under the circumstances; that a gale was brewing, he felt pretty sure, and that it would come from the southward and east; but whether it would be of long duration, or whether one of those sudden gusts, those short-lived tempests, which occur frequently during summer in the Mediterranean, he could not determine, though he was inclined to think it would be the latter; then, that

some vessel, with no good motive, was looking out for the brig, he felt almost certain; though his pride would not allow him to suppose that any one, knowing the armament of the Zodiac, would attempt to attack her openly. At the same time this was an additional object of anxiety, and would require caution.

The watch, with bare feet, and trousers tucked up to their knees, with buckets in their hands, were employed in washing decks, and as they splashed the water along the planks, and up the inner sides of the bulwarks, they laughed and jested in very buoyancy of spirits; and played off on each other various little practical jokes, which the presence of the second mate, who superintended and aided in the operation, alone prevented from being of a more boisterous character.

The poop deck, where the captain was walking, had already been washed, and the people were now in the waist, and were giving a few more vehement splashes before moving further forward, when Colonel Gauntlett, in his forage cap, a richly flowered dressing-gown, and Turkish slippers, made his appearance at the companion hatch, very nearly receiving a copious shower-bath from the contents of a bucket dashed across the deck at that moment.

"Hillo, my men," he exclaimed, in no very amiable tone. "I thought the ship was wrecked, with all that splashing and scrubbing. One would suppose that the vessel was as dirty as those Augean stables that fellow Hercules had to clean, by all the water you use."

"It's cheaper than pipe-clay, and cleaner, for it's to be had for the taking, and don't leave any dust," muttered Jem Marlin, who was the offender.

"It may be cheap, but it makes a confounded noise, and we have enough of it outside, as it is," answered the colonel, not hearing the reference to pipe-clay. "So I beg in future you won't let quite so much of it play round my head in a morning."

This was said, as he was standing with his body half-way down the companion ladder.

He then observed the master on the poop.

"Well, Mr Bowse, anything more of our friend, the Flying Dutchman?" he asked in a jocose tone.

"If you will step up here, I will tell you more about her, sir," answered the master; and, thus summoned, the colonel picked his way over the wet deck to where he was standing. "I think it right, Colonel Gauntlett, to tell you, that you may be prepared, that we are going to have a blow of it, shortly; and I want you to look at that brig out there. What do you make of her?"

"Bless me, nothing — I can't even see her," said the colonel. "Do you mean to tell me that you can distinguish what that little black mark is out there?"

"Yes, Colonel Gauntlett, I am certain that yonder object is either a brig or a ship, under her tops'ils, standing to the eastward, and that the other, you see, to the north of her, is a felucca or speronara. Now, sir, if there is any credit to be placed in the letter we got last night, and in the account the two Sicilians who

came on board gave us, and in the warnings we got at Malta, we are likely to fall in with a brig which is no better than she should be, and which is in connection, some way or other, with that same speronara. Now, there is a brig on the same course that we are; yet, for some reason or other, in no hurry to make a passage: perhaps, she is waiting for us to come up with her. Then there floats just such another craft as the speronara, supposing it is not she herself: so, if we are to fall in with a pirate, I cannot help thinking that brig ahead is the vessel. That is one thing I have to mention to you, sir; and please to look to the south'ard and east'ard. The black bank gathering there shows that we shall have a very different time of it to what we had yesterday."

"Well, Mr Bowse, what would you have us do?" exclaimed the colonel, with rather a puzzled look. "Do you wish us to put back?"

"No, Colonel Gauntlett, I have been brought up in a school where it is not the custom to run from any danger men can meet with, when there is a chance of overcoming it," replied the master, with not a little dignity in his tone. "But I thought it my duty to inform you, sir, of what, in my opinion, is likely to occur; and, please Providence, we'll do our best to meet and overcome any dangers which may appear."

"I like your spirit, Bowse, and cordially agree with you," exclaimed the colonel, taking his hand. "Those black clouds may, after all, only indicate a squall; and, as for the pirate, if one falls foul of us I think we snail have no difficulty in handling him."

"I won't deceive you, sir; if you had been as much at sea as I have you would know that those clouds foretell a gale; but such a gale as I hope the Zodiac will weather without straining a timber; and, for the pirate, we must keep our weather eye open, that he does not take us unawares. Perhaps, Providence tends the storm to keep us clear of the pirate. My advice to you, sir, is to warn the young lady and her maid of what is going to happen, and to get everything stowed in your cabin. I'm just going to turn the hands up to shorten sail."

"I wish I could be of as much use there as I hope to be alongside an enemy; but as I cannot, I will go where I can do some good." Saying which, the colonel returned to the cabin.

"All hands on deck to shorten sail," sang out the master; and ere a minute had passed, the senior mate and the watch below were on deck.

The fore-clue-garnets were manned, and the foresail was quickly clewed up, and the men flying aloft, it was securely furled. The topsails were next lowered on the caps, whence they bulged out like big balloons, about to fly away with the masts.

"Man the fore and main tops'il clew-lines and bunt-lines," sung out Bowse, laying his hand on the main. "Away with it, my lads."

The topsails were clewed up, the reef tackles hauled out, and the hands aloft lying in, in as short a time almost as it has taken to describe. Both sails were close reefed, and again sheeted home. The fore and aft mainsail was then close reefed, the jib hauled down, and fore-topmast staysail hoisted; the royal yards

were also sent down, and the brig then, under her smallest working canvas, was prepared to meet the tempest, in whatever way, or from whatever quarter it might come.

Chapter Ten.

There is a strong similarity between the aspects of physical nature and those exhibited by man, as an individual, and in the aggregate.

Before any outbreak or great commotion, from the disorganised condition of the moral body, there are observed signs of discontent, murmurings, and complaints, fierce looks and threats — these, at length, disappear, and people seem to be seized with a sudden apathy and indifference, which is as quickly cast aside, and all is rage, havoc, and confusion. So, likewise, before the coming of a storm, clouds are seen gathering in the horizon, murmurs and growls are heard, then the wind dies away, and a perfect calm, for a short time, succeeds the fury of the tempest, and, in both instances, the more perfect the calm, the more is the subsequent outbreak to be feared.

The wind had gradually died away, till the sea became smooth as glass, and rose and fell in gentle undulations, which made the vessel roll from side to side, and caused every timber and bulkhead to groan and creak.

It appeared not to have been absolutely necessary to shorten sail so soon; but as there was a dead calm, this was of no consequence, and the most prudent seamanship; as it is, at times, difficult to judge the period a squall my take to travel up to a ship.

The brig still lay with her head a little to the northward of east, and her yards were now braced up on the starboard tack to meet the wind which gave signs of coming from the southward and east. Every preparation was made, and all hands were at their stations, ready to execute any of their commander's orders which the emergency might require, when Ada, wearied of remaining in the hot cabin, came on deck, followed by her little maid; and before Bowse, who was looking to the southward, perceived them, they had gained the poop.

"This is no place for you, miss, I am sure," he exclaimed, on seeing her. "You do not know what risk you run. Oh, go below again — go below."

"Why, what is the matter, Captain Bowse?" she replied, laughing, and looking at the calm sea. "My uncle told me that we were to have a tremendous storm, and I do not feel a breath of wind."

"And so we shall, miss," he exclaimed. "You have no time to go below now without assistance. Hold on by these cleats, and tell your maid to do so too. Here it comes!"

As he spoke, the mass of clouds which had been collecting to the eastward, and gradually approaching, now came driving up bodily across the sky at a rapid rate — the dark waters below it, hitherto so smooth and calm, presented a sheet of snow-white foam, hissing and bubbling as if it were turned up and impelled onward by some gigantic besom. Ada, as she gazed with feelings of mingled terror and admiration, saw it in one long line near the brig — it reached her side — the white foam flew upwards, curling over them, and the wind, at the same

instant, striking her canvas, her tall masts seemed to bend to its fury, and then pressed downwards, the hull heeled over till the lee bulwarks were nearly submerged.

Two strong hands were at the helm, ready to turn it a-weather, should it be necessary to scud; but, in an instant, the gallant ship rose again — and then, like a courser starting for the race, she shot forward through the boiling cauldron, heeling over till her guns were in the water, but still bravely carrying her canvas. Not a rope nor a lanyard had started — not a seam in her topsails had given, and away she flew on her proper course. The veteran master stood on the poop watching for any change or increase of wind. The safety of the ship depended on his promptitude. The sea was rapidly rising; and this was soon perceptible by her uneasy motion, as she rose and fell to each receding wave, the last always appearing of greater height than its predecessors. Any moment it might be necessary either to keep her away, and, furling everything, to let her drive before the gale under bare poles, or to put her helm down and heave her to, thus to let her lie forging slowly a-head, till the gale had abated. A few minutes only had passed since the brig first felt the force of the gale, and the whole sky was now a mass of dark clouds, and the sea a sheet of white driving foam — out of which lofty waves seemed to lift their angry heads, and to urge each other into increased violence. The wind howled and whistled through the rigging; the spars creaked and bent; and the whole hull groaned with the exertion as she tore onwards. Ada, who had, when the ship heeled over, held firmly on to the weather bulwarks, gazed at the scene, to her, so novel and grand, with intense pleasure, from which fear was soon banished; and little Marianna, having followed the example of her mistress in securing herself, imitated her also in her courage. Indeed, as yet, except that they were rather wetted by the foam which came on board, when the squall first struck the brig, there was no object of terror to alarm them. The moment Bowse could withdraw his attention from the care of the ship, he hurried to assist Ada and her attendant, and to place them on the seat which surrounded the cabin skylight, where she might enjoy the magnificent spectacle of the tumultuous ocean, without the fatigue of standing, and having to hold on by the bulwarks. A cloak was thrown round her feet, and as she reclined back in the seat, she declared she felt like an ocean queen in her barge of state, reviewing her watery realms. The colonel's appearance on deck, supported by his man Mitchell, whose usual cadaverous countenance looked still more ghastly, drove away the romance in which she was beginning to indulge. He scolded her roundly for venturing on deck without his escort, and insisted on her promising never to do so again, on pain of being compelled instantly to go below.

The mate had returned to his post. The brig behaved beautifully; though she heeled over to the force of the wind, she rose buoyantly to each mountain wave, which reared its crest before her, and though the light spray which the short seas so quickly aroused would fly high above her bows, and come in showers down on her forecastle, little of it found its way aft, and not a sea which struck

her came over her bulwarks. Bowse looked delighted and proud at the behaviour of his brig, as he pointed out her good qualities to his passengers.

"There's many a craft, which is looked upon as a clipper, won't behave as she does, that I'll answer for," he observed.

He was going on with his panegyrics when his voice became silent, and his eye riveted ahead. The atmosphere, which, when the gale first came on, had been somewhat thick, had now partially cleared, and revealed to him, at the distance of little more than a mile, a large polacca brig hove to on the starboard tack. He instantly summoned his first officer to his side, and pointed out the stranger to him.

"What think you of that fellow, Timmins?" he asked.

The mate took a look at the stranger through his glass.

"A fine polacca brig, sir, as one can see with half an eye," he answered deliberately; "but more of her I cannot say, as she shows no colours. We must keep away a little though, sir, or we shall be right down upon her."

"We should — starboard the helm a point my lads," exclaimed the master. "Steady, that will take us clear, and we shall be near enough to have a look at him. Ah! there goes some buntin' aloft. What colours are they, Timmins?"

"The Austrian ensign, sir," replied the mate. "A black eagle on a white ground, and there flies a pennant at his mast head."

"That's extraordinary indeed," exclaimed the master. "Hoist the ensign there," he shouted. "Austrian or devil, we'll show him that we are not ashamed of our flag, and will not strike it either in a hurry. Come here, Timmins, we mustn't frighten the young lady by what we say. You know the paper dropped on board here last night; now it's my opinion that that's the very brig it speaks about, and the one the felucca's two men tried to persuade us was an Austrian man-of-war. To my eye, she looks fifty times more like a Greek than an Austrian, for all that her colours say. Well, what's your opinion that we ought to do?"

"With respect to her being a Greek, I think she is," answered the mate. "And if she's a pirate, we ought to do our best to stand clear of her, seeing that we were commissioned to carry merchandise, and not to look after such gentry; but if she comes after us, and we can't get clear of her, that alters the case, sir, and we must stand to our guns and fight her."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Timmins," answered the master, laying his hand on the mate's arm.

"Turn the hands up, my good fellow, and let them go to quarters." (The people were at their breakfast.) "We will not fire the first shot; but if she attacks us, we will give it them as well as we can. One satisfaction is, that they cannot board us while the gale lasts." While the mate flew forward to execute the orders, Bowse approached his passengers, and, pointing out the stranger to them, to which they were now rapidly drawing near, told them his suspicions as to her character, and advised them to go below.

"But do you think he will fire into us?" inquired the colonel.

"He would gain little by so doing, while the gale lasts," replied Bowse, "and he might get injured in return, as he probably knows that we have guns on board."

"There you see, Ada, there is little chance of any of us being hurt, but there is a possibility — so you must go below again."

This the colonel said in a positive tone, and his niece was obliged to comply.

"Oh, how I wish Captain Fleetwood was here in the Ione," she thought, as she quitted the deck. "No pirate would dare to molest us."

The stranger was hove to, under her fore-topsail, and appeared to be making what seamen call very fine weather of it. The Zodiac came down scarcely a cable's length from her quarter, but the stranger gave no sign of any intention of accompanying her. Very few seamen appeared on her deck, and two or three officers only, whose uniform, seen through the glass, was evidently that of Austria. One of them, who, from his wearing an epaulette on either shoulder, Bowse thought must be the captain, leaped up on the taffrail, and waved his hat to them, while another, in the lingua franca, sung out through a speaking trumpet —

"Heave to, and we will keep your company."

"I'll see you d — d first, my fine fellow," answered the master, who had been attentively surveying them through his glass. "I wish I was as certain of heaven as I am that the fellow who waved to us is the same who came on board when in Malta harbour. I know his face, spite of his changed dress."

"I don't think he's unlike, except that he didn't look so tall quite as the Greek you mean," observed the mate. "However, as they did not fire at us, and don't seem inclined to keep company with us either, I suppose they are after other and surer game."

The Zodiac had by this time left the stranger far astern, and numberless were the surmises of the crew as to what she was and what she was about. All agreed in pronouncing her a Greek-built craft. She was a large vessel, too, and well armed, if all the ports which showed on a side had guns to them; and she was, probably, as are most of the Greek vessels of that class, very fast. It is odd that they did not, however, regard her with half the suspicion that they did the little speronara, which could scarcely have harmed them, by mortal means, if she had tried.

The Zodiac had left the polacca brig about eight or ten miles astern, and her topsails could just be seen rising and falling above the boiling cauldron of waters which intervened, as she remounted the seas or sunk into the trough between them.

The ship had also by this time assumed her usual peaceful appearance; the shot and powder had been returned below, the guns were run in and secured, the small arms had been replaced in their racks, and the colonel had withdrawn the charges of his pistols, and sent Mitchell with them to his cabin.

"Well, I suppose as soon as this tornado blows over, we shall have a tranquil time of it, and hear no more of your Flying Dutchman and bloody pirates," he

observed to the master, as he held on the weather bulwarks. “I did not bargain for all this sort of work, I can tell you, when I refused a passage in a king’s ship in order that I might avoid the society of those young jackanapes of naval officers, and save my little girl from being exposed to their interested assiduities.”

“Can’t say what may happen to us,” returned Bowse, who was a great stickler for the honour of the navy, and did not at all relish the colonel’s observations. “I’ve done my best to please you, and I’m sure the officers of any of his Majesty’s ships would have done the same. I’ve belonged myself to the service, and have held the king’s warrant, and I have had as good opportunities of judging of the character of a very large number of officers as any in the same station, and I must say, sir, in justice to them, though with all respect to you, Colonel Gauntlett, that a less interested and less money-loving set of men than they are, are not to be found in any profession.”

“Well, well, Mr Bowse,” answered the colonel, seeing by the frown on the master’s good-natured countenance that he was in earnest, “I did not want to hear a defence of the navy, but I should like to have your opinion as to when there is a probability of our enjoying a little quiet again, and whether we are likely to be molested by these reputed pirates after all.”

“I do not think, by the looks of it, that the gale will last as long as I at first supposed,” said the master, at once appeased. “As for the matter of the pirates, no man can answer; I’m sure I can’t.”

“Well, but what do you think, Mr Timmins?” said the colonel, turning to the mate.

Now, although the officer would not have ventured to give an opinion in opposition to his superior, yet, as Bowse had not expressed one, he felt himself at liberty to pronounce his judgment.

“Why, sir — looking at the state of the case on both sides — the long and short of it is, in my opinion, that there has been a bit of free-trading going on with some of the Liverpool merchantmen, which isn’t at all unusual; and that those chaps who came about us mistook us for one of their friends; and then, when they found their mistake, wanted to bung up our eyes with a cock and a bull story about pirates. That’s what I think about it. You see that brig, whether Austrian or not, was looking out for some one else.”

“Was she, though?” exclaimed the master, with sudden animation. “I think not; for, by Heavens, here she comes.”

All those who heard the exclamation turned their eyes over the taffrail.

Just astern was the polacca brig — her head had paid off, and, with a reef shaken out of each of her topsails, she was seen heeling over to the gale, and tearing away through the foaming waves in chase of them.

The master, whose suspicions as to the honesty of her character had never been removed, now no longer hesitated to declare that he believed her to be the very pirate of whom he had been warned. He felt that he was now called on to decide what course it would be wisest to pursue. To avoid her by outsailing her,

he knew to be hopeless — except that, by carrying on sail to the very last, he might induce her to do the same, till, perhaps, she might carry away her masts or spars, and the victory might remain with the stoutest and best-found ship. His next resource was the hope of crippling her with his guns, as she drew near, and thus preventing her from pursuing, while he escaped; and if both means failed, he trusted that Providence would give the victory to British courage and seamanship, should she attempt to engage him alongside. He explained his intentions to his officers and Colonel Gauntlett, who fully agreed with him, and, acting on the first plan he proposed trying, he immediately ordered a reef to be shaken out of the topsails. The men flew aloft obedient to the order — the reefs were quickly shaken out, and the yards again hoisted up.

Bowse watched with anxiety to see how the brig bore the additional canvas. A few minutes' trial convinced him that she might even carry more without much risk. If any difference was perceptible, it was that the crests of the seas she met broke in thicker showers of spray over her bows; but she did not seem to heel over to it more than before.

The crew, called on deck to make sail, at once divined, by seeing the stranger in their wake, the reason of it, and flew with alacrity to their duty. They were all ready to fight, if necessary; they would rather have been chasing a vessel which they might hope to make their prize; but they were in no way indifferent to the excitement of endeavouring to outsail another craft, even though they might have been accused of being employed in the inglorious business of running away.

"Bless the little beauty, she goes along nicely through it, don't she, old ship," said Jem Marlin to his chum. "Them outlandish mounseers astern there will be clever if they comes up to us."

All hands remained on the deck, for they had not been piped below again.

Bowse, every now and then, gave a scrutinising glance astern at the stranger; but it was impossible to determine whether there was any difference in their relative distance.

The two brigs were now under the same canvas, for the stranger had not shaken out a second reef in the topsails, when the Zodiac shook out the first.

The crew stood at their station ready to obey the next order.

"She'll bear the fore-sail on her, Mr Timmins, if we close reef it," said Bowse; "send some hands up and loose it, and hook on reef-burtons ready for reefing."

As soon as the sail was let fall it flew out in thundering claps, as if it would fly away from the yard, and there was some danger of carrying it away or springing it, but steady hands were there, and the clew garnets being eased down, the reef-burtons hauled out, the ear-rings were soon secured, and the points tied; the lee clew garnet was then eased off, and the sheet steadied aft. The tack was roused down, another pull had of the sheet, and the bowline hauled taut, the weather-lift and brace being hauled taut, the sail stood like a board.

With this sail she carried too much lee helm, and it was difficult work for the helmsman to lift her, so as to let her rise over the seas, which now came one after the other in quick succession, rushing up her bows, and threatening to curl bodily over her bulwarks.

"Now, my lads, aft here, and shake a reef out of the fore-and-aft mainsail."

Led by the mate, the men sprung aft, the points were soon cast off, and the reef-pendant eased off. The throat and peak halyards were manned, the main-sheet was slightly eased off, and the sail, thus enlarged, was hoisted to the mast. The instant effect was to make her carry a weather-helm, and great care was now required to prevent her flying up into the wind, and being taken aback; a most perilous position to be placed in under the present circumstances.

To prevent this, the fore-stay-sail was hoisted. As the master watched the effect of all the canvas he had packed on the brig, he saw clearly that she would not bear another stitch; indeed, she had already very much more set than under any but the most extraordinary circumstances he would have ventured to carry. He, however, felt that he could do more with her than could any stranger. He knew that every timber and plank in her was sound, every spar had been well proved, and the canvas was all new, and every inch of rigging about her he or his mate had seen fitted and turned in. He knew, indeed, that all was good, and it was this feeling, with a right confidence in his own knowledge and judgment, which gave him courage on this trying occasion.

Onward the brig tore through the foaming waves, her lee-scuppers completely under water. Now a dark sea would appear right a-head, seemingly about to overwhelm her, but buoyantly her bow would rise to it, the foam on its summit alone sweeping over her; then another would come of less height, and, as if disdaining to surmount it, she would cleave her way through it, while her decks were deluged as a punishment for her audacity. Nearly everything on deck had been properly secured, and such trifling articles as were not, were soon washed into the lee-scuppers or overboard. The crew, driven from forward, were huddled together close to the break of the poop, under shelter of the weather-bulwark, while Bowse and the first mate stood at their old post.

"It's as much as she'll carry," said Timmins.

He thought it was a great deal too much, but did not like to say so.

Bowse looked at the stranger before answering.

"I only hope she will try to carry a great deal more," he replied. "See, they are beginning to follow our example."

The polacca brig had now not only set her foresail and mainsail, but had also shaken another reef out of her topsails. She thus already had more sail on her than the Zodiac.

"Now, then," said Bowse, "if we do but hold our own, she will begin to think we shall escape her, and they will be shaking another of those reefs out."

"If they do, they will just get the drop in the pitcher too much," said the mate.

"That's just what I wish they may do," replied the master. "But, ah! hold on

for your lives, my lads."

A dark, circling wave appeared directly ahead of the vessel, as if it had risen suddenly out of the water. She rose at it like a bold hunter, without hesitation, attempting to take a high fence beyond his powers. Its force was too great for her, she stopped, and trembled in every timber, then again she tried, and dashing headlong into it, the watery hill came thundering down on her decks, tearing away her long boat and spare spars, hencoops, caboose, and water casks, and, making a breach through the lee-bulwarks, washed them overboard. Had not the hatches been well secured the Zodiac, with all in her, might never have risen again. Cries of terror were heard, and many a bold seaman turned pale; but none of the crew were injured, and the ship again flew buoyantly onward.

"That's what we may call our drop too much," said the mate. "Don't you think we ought to take some of the canvas off her, sir?"

"Timmins, we've long known each other, and you know I'm no coward; but I tell you that my conviction is, that there will be no child's play with that fellow astern if he comes alongside us. Heaven only knows who'll come off the best if it comes to blows. He has twice as many guns as we have, if not more, and longer pieces, depend on it, and, probably, five times as many hands. These are fearful odds, and I don't think any man can say it's cowardly to shrink from them. I know, too, the sort of fellows those are on board yonder craft, and sooner than fall into their power, I would run the brig, and all in her, under water. Till she made sail in chase, I had my doubts about her; I now have none. You see I don't risk the loss of our masts without good cause, and now see to getting life-lines along the lee-bulwarks, and secure them as you best can."

The mate made no answer, except a hurried acquiescence in his chief's reasons; and then calling three seamen to him, he worked his way forward to the forecastle, to search for the requisite cordage for passing fore and aft along the sides of the vessel.

Colonel Gauntlett had gone below to explain the state of affairs to poor Ada, and to endeavour to tranquillise her alarms. Nothing daunted the old veteran himself; a soldier of the great duke's school, he was accustomed to hardships and vicissitudes of all sorts. Brave as his sword, and delighting in the excitement of danger, his spirits rose in proportion to its imminence, and all the sour testiness of his temper vanished; a temper which had grown on him since the return of peace caused him to sheath his sword, and tempted him to commit the folly, as an old bachelor, of leading an idle life. Married, and with a family, he would have had them to interest him; but, as it was, he had only to think of his own aches and ills, and, perhaps, past follies; and to brood over what he called the neglects he had experienced from his ungrateful country. No man on board, perhaps, was so anxious as he was to have a skirmish with the rover, but he was not aware of the dreadful odds which would be opposed to him, and of the too probable fate which would await all hands, should victory side with the enemy. His arguments had some effect in calming his niece's

fears; but not those of poor little Marianna, who, pale and weeping, sat at the feet of her mistress, imploring her to urge the captain and her uncle to return to Malta.

Ada, in her turn, had to act the part of comforter, and she promised her uncle that she would constantly remain below till they had escaped from the pirate, and the storm was over. Her uncle had not attempted to deceive her, nor did she shut her eyes to the greatness of the threatening danger — yet hope rose triumphant in her bosom. Though the storm had, at first, appeared very terrific, she got accustomed by degrees to the noise and commotion, and she could not persuade herself that a British vessel, manned by so many brave men, would not prove the victor against a pirate, of whatever nation she might be. By the faint light which found its way into her cabin, she was able to read; and that book was in her hand from which the truest source of comfort can be drawn, and which she, in her turn, imparted to her ignorant and trembling companion. Thus, between reading herself and explaining the subject to Marianna, and, at times, approaching the footstool of her Maker in prayer, Ada passed many hours, which would otherwise have become insupportable through anxiety and fear, and thus employed, we must leave her, to return on deck.

Chapter Eleven.

The longer a sensible man lives (for a fool may live and not learn), the more convinced he will become of the importance of laying a firm foundation for every undertaking, whether it be a constitution to live under, or a house to live in, an education for his children, a coat for his back, shoes for his feet, or a ship to convey himself or his merchandise from one part of the globe to the other. He learns that it is wisest and cheapest to have all the materials of the best, to employ the best workmen, and to pay them the best wages. It is the fashion, nowadays, to get everything at a price, to which is given the name of cheap — no matter at what cost or ruin to the consumer as well as the producer, for both are equally losers — the one from being badly said, the other from getting a bad article. On every side, one ears the cries of cheap government, cheap houses, cheap education, and cheap clothing; and the people are always found ready to offer to supply them. Wiser than this generation are seamen. They know, from experience, that cheap clothes and cheap ships do not answer; that both are apt to fail at the very moment their services are most required; and a good officer, therefore, spares no expense or trouble in seeing that everything is good and sound on board his ship, from keelson to truck, below and aloft. Such a man was our friend Captain Bowse.

The spars and rigging of the Zodiac did full justice to those who selected the first, and fitted the latter. Not a spar was sprung — not a strand parted with the tremendous strain put on them. It was almost too much for the ship, Bowse himself owned. It was taking the wear of years out of her in a day — as a wild debauch, or any violent exertion, will injure the human frame, more than years of ordinary toil. Though the masts stood, the ship, it was very evident, must be strained, from the way in which she was driven through the water, and made to buffet with the waves. On rushed the brig.

"That is what I call tearing the marrow out of a body's bones," said Bill Bullock. "Well, bless the old barkie; there's few could stand it as she does. I never seed any one carry on so as our skipper does, this blessed day — no, neither now, nor since the time I first went afloat."

"Nor I neither, old ship," answered Jem. "But for that matter, as the parson says, there's a time to stay at anchor, and a time to make sail, and go along as if the devil was a driver — only I do wish that that ere beggar astern was right ahead now, and that we was a chasin' her, and every now and then a slappin' at her with our bow-chasers."

"Right, Jem — my sentiments is the same; but if you comes for to go to look into the rights of the case, like a man should do, why you sees as how, if she has got twenty guns, which can sink us from where our shot can't reach 'em, and we has only got four guns, for the Quakers only has to do when you comes to frighten people at a distance, then you see as how it's wiser for we to run away,

while we has got legs to run with, than to try to run when we are on our way to the bottom."

"Jobson!" cried the master, addressing the carpenter, who had just spoken, "sound the well, and see if she's made any water."

Jobson performed his duty, and reported two feet of water in the hold.

"She's made that, sir, though, since we began to carry on. She was as dry as a cork yesterday," he observed.

"I did not expect less, though," returned the master. "She must be strong not to let it in faster. We'll sound again in another half hour."

For the first two or three hours of the chase, it was difficult to determine whether the stranger gained on them or not: but, by the time five had passed away, she had clearly come up very much. Bowse looked at his topmasts and topsail-yards, and then at the lee-scuppers, and shook his head. He was meditating the possibility of shaking out another reef. He wished that he could divine some method to induce the stranger to set more sail; but this hope had failed, for as he was gaining on them without it, he was not likely to do so. The master watched him anxiously through his glass. He seemed to stand up well to his canvas, and there was but little chance of his carrying anything away. On coming to this conclusion, Bowse began to consider whether it would not be more prudent to shorten sail himself, so as to be in better condition to meet the enemy when he should come up — a result which he feared must, sooner or later, occur. Even should the weather moderate, the polacca brig would probably have a still greater advantage; but then again, his principle was to struggle to the last — never to yield to death or misfortune, while the faintest gasp remains — never to let hope expire — so he determined still to drive the ship through it. Again the well was sounded. The water had increased another half foot. The mate shook his head. Two more anxious hours passed away.

"How much has she gained on us now, Timmins?" answered Bowse, who had returned from snatching a hasty meal below.

"The best part of half a league at least, sir," answered the mate. "If she comes up at this rate, she'll be within hail before the first watch is over to-night. Now, sir, as the carpenter reports the water increasing fast, and to have to keep the men at the pumps, where they must go for a spell, will make them unfit to meet the enemy, I venture to advise that we take the strain off the ship at once. It's clearly nothing else that makes her leak as she does, and we shall then meet that fellow by daylight, which I tell you honestly, Captain Bowse, I for one would rather do."

Bowse listened to his mate's opinion with respect, but he doubted much whether to act upon it.

"What you say has much reason in it," he answered; "but send the hands to the pumps first, and we'll judge how they can keep the water under. If, after they've cleared the ship, it gains upon half the watch, we'll shorten sail; but if we can easily keep the leaks under, we'll carry on to the last."

The clank of the pumps was heard amid the roaring of the gale, and the loud

dash of the water over the ship, as the crew performed that most detested portion of a seaman's duty. The result was watched for with anxiety by the captain, for he saw that on it depended how soon they might be brought into action with the pirate. If he could still manage to keep ahead of him he might induce him to give up the chase; or he might fall in with a man-of-war, or some armed merchantman, in company with whom no pirate would dare to attack them. It did occur to him, that to ease the ship, he might keep her before the wind, and run for some port on the Italian coast; but there was a wide extent of sea to be crossed before he could reach it, and the pirate being probably just as fast off the wind as on it, would still overtake him; and though he might, as he trusted to do, beat him off, he would be so much further away from his port.

"Well, what does the carpenter report?" he asked, as the mate appeared, after the well had been sounded.

"We've gained a foot upon the leaks, sir; but it's hard work to keep them under, and if I might advise — "

"Please Heaven, we'll carry on, then, on the ship!" exclaimed the master, interrupting him. "Let half a watch at a time work the pumps. Before long the weather may moderate."

The day wore on, and the pursuer and the pursued held their course with little variation. The Zodiac tore her way through the water, and sea succeeding sea met her persevering bows, and either yielded her a passage or flew in deluges over her decks. Night came on, and the stranger was upward of two leagues astern. The mate had before miscalculated her distance; his anxiety to shorten sail had probably somewhat blinded him. If the scene on board the Zodiac appeared terrific during daylight, much more so was it when darkness added its own peculiar horrors. Still not a sheet nor a tack would the brave master start, and he resolved, if the gale did not further increase, to run through the night without shortening sail. He himself set an example of hardihood and resolution to his crew, for scarcely a moment did he quit his post during the day, or the dreary hours of the first watch. As the short twilight disappeared, the stranger grew less and less distinct, till her shadowy outline could alone be traced, and even that by degrees vanished from the view of all but the most keen-sighted, till at last she could nowhere be discerned. An anxious look out was kept for her; for though shrouded by the obscurity from their sight, every one on deck felt that she was where she had last been seen, if not nearer; and some even fancied they could see her looming, surrounded by a halo of unnatural light, through the darkness.

It was in the first hour of the morning-watch, and neither Bowse nor his mate, though they swept the sea to the westward with their night-glasses, could anywhere distinguish her.

"We have done better than we could have hoped for," observed the master. "It will soon be day, and we then need not fear her."

"It will be more than three good hours yet before we have anything like daylight," returned the mate; "and that cursed craft may be alongside us before

then."

"Well, we are prepared for her," returned the master.

"I hope so," exclaimed the mate; "for, by Heaven, Captain Bowse, there she is, well on our weather quarter."

The mate spoke truly. There evidently was a brig, though dimly visible, hovering, as it were, like a dark spirit, in the quarter he indicated.

The crew soon discovered her also, and if any of them had before felt inclined to seek rest below, they did so no longer.

Another hour passed away; but the stranger had not altered her position. There she hung, like a dark shadow, indistinctly visible, yet causing no doubt of something ominous of evil being there, as some bird of prey hovering about, ready to pounce down any moment, and destroy them.

The morning light brought the stranger clearly in view, at about the same distance; and at the same period of time the ship, righting suddenly from the downward pressure, to which she had been so long exposed, showed that there was a lull of the wind. It was but momentarily, for again she heeled over as before. Again, however, she righted, and this time, her lee scuppers remained for longer free of the water.

Bowse looked to windward: he was about to order a couple of reefs more to be shaken out of the topsails, when another violent blast almost laid her on her beam ends.

The hardy crew, wearied with the unremitting exertions of the night, looked at each other in despair, as the sea literally washed up the decks to leeward. A loud crash was heard, and the fore-topmast went over the side, carrying away the jibboom. It was the last expiring effort of the gale.

The stranger now shook out all the reefs in her topsails and courses; but it was soon evident that there was no occasion for her so doing, as she continued to maintain the exact position she had held when first seen in the morning.

The forenoon watch had just been set, when Colonel Gauntlett came on deck.

"A nice night we've had of it, captain," he observed in a tone which showed but little anxiety on his part. "It was only towards the morning the infernal hubbub would allow me a moment's sleep. But, hillo! what have you been doing with your foremast? Why, it's shorn of half its just proportions. And a pretty work seems to have been going forward on your deck. Why, I should have thought you had been in action already."

"With the winds and waves we have, sir," answered Bowse. "I wish we were in a better condition to meet an enemy."

"Well, I wish we were, if there is a prospect of our seeing one again," said the colonel. "However, I suppose you've managed to give the go-by to our friend, the Flying Dutchman."

Bowse, whose spirits weariness and anxiety had much lowered, shook his head, and pointed to the stranger.

"I wish I could say so, Colonel Gauntlett. There she is, as big as life; and,

what is more, may be alongside of us any moment those on board her may desire."

"Ods life, then we shall have to fight her after all," exclaimed the colonel, with animation. "It's a pity we didn't have it out yesterday, and have enjoyed a quiet night's rest after it."

"I wish we had, sir," said the master, his spirits a little cheered by the colonel's coolness. "We should have had an advantage we shall not enjoy to-day. She has the weather gauge, and may select her own time to engage us, and is, I suspect, but waiting till the sea goes down, when she may run us alongside, and take advantage of the great superiority of men she has, depend on it, on board her."

"We must see, however, what we can do," replied the colonel. "But, after all, the fellow may be an Austrian. He has hoisted those colours."

"Merely to blind us, sir, depend on it," answered the master. "He is even now edging down upon us."

As he spoke, the stranger at length set his topgallant-sails and royals; but if his intention was to run alongside, it was frustrated.

The varying wind, which had been gradually lulling, now on a sudden died away completely, even before the sea created by the gale had had time to go down, and the two vessels lay rolling from side to side like logs on the water, without power to progress, just beyond the range of each other's guns.

Those who have cruised in the Mediterranean Sea must have lively recollections of the calms which have stopped their onward progress — the slow rolling of the vessel without any apparent cause, the loud flapping of the canvas against the masts seemingly feeling anger at its inaction, the hot sun striking down on the decks and boiling up the pitch in the seams between the planks, the dazzling glare too bright for the eyes to endure from the mirror-like surface of the water, and, above all, the consequent feelings of discontent, lassitude, and weariness.

Notwithstanding the heat and the motion, and the excessive weariness they felt from their incessant toil, Bowse and his bold crew set manfully to work to repair the damage the Zodiac had received during the storm. All hands laboured cheerfully, for they saw that everything might depend on the speed with which they could get the ship to rights again. Although the damage on deck was considerable, yet their first care was to get up a new topmast, and another jib-boom out, for both which purposes they fortunately had spare ones on board. Bowse had gone for a minute below, where Timmins speedily followed him.

"A boat shoving off from the polacca brig, sir," said the mate.

He was on deck in a minute; by his glass he saw a six-oared gig rapidly approaching; she had in the stern-sheets four persons, three of whom were dressed as officers, and wore cocked hats.

The passengers were on deck, as well as the two mates, watching the boat.

"I suspect after all we shall find that we were unnecessarily alarmed, and they will prove very honest gentlemen," observed the colonel.

"I trust they may be," said Ada. "It would be very dreadful to have to fight."

"I'm afraid there's little honesty either on board the craft or the boat; for I trust little to the Austrian bunting flying at her peak," answered Bowse. "You must not be frightened, young lady, when you see the men armed. It is safe to be prepared — Mr Timmins, get the cutlasses and small arms on deck, and send the people to their quarters — Colonel Gauntlett, I will speak with you, if you please;" and the master led the colonel aside. "I have to propose a bold plan, and a dangerous one, should it not succeed; but if it does, I think our safety is secured. The pirate — for pirate the commander of that brig is, I am assured — will, I suspect, through audacity or fool-hardiness, venture on our deck; now, what I propose, if he does, is to entice the rest of the people on board, and to seize them and their boat, and to hold them as hostages."

"But suppose they should prove to be really Austrians," urged the colonel. "It would be an odd way of treating officers who come to pay a friendly visit; and, seeing there are ten men in the boat, it will not be quite so easy either."

"No fear of that, sir," answered Bowse; "they venture here because they don't know what Englishmen are made of. They have been accustomed to deal with Turks and degenerate Greeks and Italians, and fancy they can manage us as easy; they come to see the condition we are in. Now, as I feel certain that boat comes here with the intention and hope of taking this brig without any resistance, I want to make them fall into their own trap."

The colonel thought a little time. "Well," he answered, "I do not dislike your plan on the whole, provided we are sure the fellows intend us treachery. What part am I to play in it?"

"Why, sir, I want you to hold the chief man of them in conversation, while I talk to another; for I intend to let only two at a time come on deck — and then, if we can get them below, we can secure them, and, before the rest find it out, we will invite two more below, and secure them. I want you to offer a reason for our carrying so much sail yesterday and last night, to throw them off their guard, and to make them suppose we still believe them Austrians."

"But what am I to say about the way we carried sail?" asked the colonel.

"Why, sir, you see, we did not go out of our course, so you can say that you are in a very great hurry, and insisted on my making more sail, while, as the ship is bran new, I was not afraid of pleasing you, particularly as you promised a good round sum more if I got you in before a certain time."

"The story is plausible, but I am afraid it will not bear looking into," observed the colonel; "however, I will play my part as I best can."

"We will not give them time to look into that or anything else," replied Bowse. "They will observe the loss of caboose and boats, and also of our bulwarks, it is true; but we must settle them before they have time to consult about it; or we may point it out to them at once, and tell them that it happened at the end of the gale, and that it would have made us shorten sail if the wind had not dropped."

The plan of the master being agreed to, preparations were made to receive

their very doubtful visitors. Ada and her attendant were on the poop, with Mitchell to guard them. The colonel and master, with the first mate stood at the gangway, on either side of which were stationed two of the strongest men in the ship, their cutlasses being concealed. The second mate, with six other hands, well armed, had orders to rush aft the moment they were summoned, and to look after the boats and those who might remain in her, and on no account to let them escape.

By the time all the arrangements were made, the boat was close to. Bowse examined her carefully. The crew were dressed as European seamen, and pulled in their fashion, though rather irregularly, and the uniform of the officers was perfectly correct, as far as he knew.

The boat dashed alongside without hesitation, and two of the officers sprung up on deck; the rest would have followed, but the two men at the gangway stopped them, in spite of gesticulations and strenuous endeavours.

"Messieurs, some one on board, I presume, speaks French?" said the principal of the two, taking off his cocked-hat, and bowing profoundly, with a glance towards the poop, where Ada sat.

"Moi — I do," answered the colonel, with not the best pronunciation in the world. "Que voulez-vous, Messieurs?"

"I am delighted to find a gentleman with whom I can converse in a common language. My native German I judged would be hopeless," observed the officer.

He was a remarkably fine-looking man, with a dark, curling moustache, and a free, bold manner. Now the colonel had studied German in the course of his military education, and spoke it well; he therefore immediately answered in that language.

The officer looked puzzled, and then laughingly said, "Oh! I must compliment you; but we will speak in French — it is the proper language for the intercourse of strangers — a mutual ground on which they meet. I have come to offer the services of my ship's company in putting your vessel to rights; for I see that she has suffered severely in the gale, which has just passed."

"Many thanks to you, monsieur," returned the colonel; "but I believe the crew of the brig are fully competent to perform all the work which is required; and you see they have already accomplished much of it."

"I see they have been at work; but it will still occupy them much time to put you to rights," observed the stranger. "You carried on yesterday and during the night more than I ever saw a vessel do before; and may I ask why you endeavoured to outsail me as you did yesterday."

"Certainly," returned the colonel; and gave the explanation arranged with Bowse.

"Ah, it was a pity though, it made me suspicious of you," exclaimed the officer. "And did you not receive a message by a Sicilian speronara, which I sent to invite any merchantmen to put themselves under my protection?"

"Oh! we received it; and though doubts might have occurred, we were grateful," returned the colonel; then, in a low whisper to Bowse, he said. "Seize

the rascals as soon as you like — we will ask them below."

He then turned back to the officers.

"Will you not come below to take some refreshment? We shall be happy to offer it also to those in the boat."

The stranger hesitated: at that instant Ada, who had risen to witness the conference, came to the break of the poop. She had been examining the countenances of the officers.

"The Prince Caramitzo, I am sure!" she exclaimed.

"Prince! Count Zappa, the pirate, you mean!" cried the colonel, stamping in a passion.

"It's all discovered then. Seize them my lads!" cried the master, rushing forward to aid in executing his own order.

"Ah! is it treachery you mean me?" exclaimed the seeming Austrian officer, dealing the poor master a violent blow. "It is Zappa you see, and whom you will soon learn to know."

And before any one had time to rush forward and seize him, he, with his companion, leaped into the boat which, at the same instant, shoved off; and, with rapid strokes, began to pull away.

"Give them a dose of the carronades!" exclaimed the master; but, before the guns could be brought to bear, and could be fired, the stranger was a long way from the ship, and not a shot told. There was thus no longer any disguise — nor could they, should they be conquered, expect any mercy at the hands of the pirate.

Chapter Twelve.

We must now go back to the day on which our story commences, or rather, at an early hour on the following morning, when the young Greek, Argiri Caramitzo, and his Italian companion, Paolo Montifalcone, left the ball-room of the Auberge de Provence.

Highly satisfied with the adventures of the evening, Caramitzo took his way to the abode of the Jew, Aaron Bannech, not deeming it prudent to sleep under any other roof; perhaps he would not have trusted himself under that of the Israelite, had he not felt assured that the preservation of his life and liberty was of very considerable importance to his host. As he reached the door of the house, he encountered the beggar Giacomo, who had concealed himself, till his approach, beneath a neighbouring archway.

"Hist, signor," said the beggar, hobbling up. "I'm glad you are at length come. I have long waited for you, to give you some important information regarding your safety. But who is the person with you? May I speak before him?"

"He is a friend — say on," replied the Greek.

"Well, signor, what I have to say is, that before long you will find this city too hot for you," answered Giacomo. "As you directed me, I watched the three Greeks you left at the caffè. For a long time they remained inside, and at last when they came out I followed them for some distance, and heard them making inquiries for the office of the police. They went to the wrong one first, and then I followed them to the other. Fortunately the office was closed, and they were told that they could not make their complaint till to-morrow. I could understand but little that they said, yet I am certain that they spoke of having seen you here."

"You have done well," returned the Greek. "You saw where they lodge?"

"Si, signor, certainly."

"Then follow them to-morrow, and let me know the result of their information."

Saying this, the Greek summoned the Jew to admit him and his companion to the house.

"I shall have to quit you to-morrow," he observed, as their host, after examining numerous bolts and bars, followed them to the only sitting-room the Jew possessed; his dining-room, library, and sanctum, where all his most private and important business was transacted.

"What! will you not take a passage by the good brig, the Zodiac," asked the Jew. "I had arranged everything for you, and should not have had to appear in the affair."

"I had done my part also at the ball to-night, and I flatter myself the English colonel and his niece would have been pleased to have my company. All would

have gone well, had it not been for the appearance of those Greeks, who fancy they know me, and will swear that I am no other than the pirate Zappa, which, by the bye, exhibits the folly of being merciful. Now, though with your assistance, my friend, I might easily prove who I am, still, as you know I might find the detention inconvenient, I shall therefore sail early in the speronara. Your letters may be addressed to me as before, but bear in mind that your information is generally too stale. Now I will get a little rest, if you will show me where I am to sleep."

"Wonderful man," muttered the Jew, as he quitted his guest, who had thrown himself on a couch, and was already asleep. "He has no fear of treachery."

The Greek knew that the Jew was a wise man, and would not kill his golden goose. The Jew had procured some ordinary morning dresses for the Greek and his companion, and habited in them, with Italian cloaks thrown round them, they next morning fearlessly took their way to the quays.

Manuel was in attendance, and Paolo immediately embarked, and went on board the speronara, while the Greek returned once more into the city. Had any one watched the movements of the two strangers, they would have observed that the Greek never for an instant allowed the Italian to leave his side while they were on shore, and that the latter regarded him with a look much more of fear than of affection, somewhat as an ill-used dog does his master, though he still follows his footsteps.

As the Greek walked along, he made observations on several vessels which had been mentioned to him by the beggar, and afterwards looked into the police-office, where his accusers had not arrived. Again, therefore, returning to the quay, he summoned the boatman, Manuel, who had returned for him, and directed him to pull on board the speronara, to which he had previously sent an order by Paolo to get under weigh, and heave to till he should come on board.

"Let draw," he exclaimed, as soon as he stepped on board, "we will try the quality of your craft, Master Alessandro, steer as if we were bound for Syracuse, and afterwards we will run off shore. In case any vessel should be sent in chase, I wish to mislead them as to the course we have taken."

"Capisco — I understand, signor," said the Sicilian. "We have a good breeze, and shall reach the Sea Hawk, if she is at her post, long before dark."

"Did you ever know her miss her rendezvous?" said the Greek. "And now, my good Paolo, let me ask how it has fared with you since yesterday?"

"As it may with a man weary of the world," returned the youth, sighing deeply.

"You will yet do bravely, Paolo," said Caramitzo. "How like you now the life of a sailor? We have variety and excitement enough to please you?"

"Too much — I should prefer less change, and a more tranquil existence," returned the youth. "But I am willing to undergo all to please you."

"The very words your sister would have spoken. Come, come, Paolo, you must rouse yourself, and learn to enjoy the pleasures of life, instead of moping

and weeping as she does."

As the Greek spoke, the youth's eyes flashed angrily; but as if with an effort, he controlled himself, and his countenance directly assumed its usual dejected look.

The speronara, as has been described, kept first to the northward; and after standing in that direction for six or seven miles, she eased off her sheets, and ran off to the eastward. After three hours a large polacca brig was seen from her deck a couple of points on her larboard bow. On this a small flag was run up to the end of her main-yard, which was immediately answered by the brig. The speronara then hauled her wind on the starboard tack which brought her head looking almost into Valetta harbour, while the brig hove to on the same tack.

The Greek had for some time been looking through a spy-glass towards Malta, which lay like a line of blue hillocks rising from the sea.

"Here Paolo," he said, at length. "Do you take the glass, and tell me, what vessels you see, which appear to have come out of the port we left this morning."

For some time Paolo made no answer. He was examining the intervening space between them and the shore.

The Greek, meantime, reclined on a seat to rest, for he was weary with his exertions.

Paolo at last addressed him.

"I make out a square-rigged vessel of some sort, steering this way. She looms large."

The Greek sprang to his feet, and took the glass.

"She is the one we are in search of," he exclaimed. "Up with the helm and let draw the head sheets."

The orders were obeyed, and the speronara ran off again before the wind towards the brig, with which she had communicated, and the head of whose topsails were just seen above the horizon. It took a couple of hours before the speronara hove to close to her, by which time the day was almost over.

The brig was a remarkably fine looking vessel, with a long low hull, painted black, with sharp bows, a clean run and a raking counter. She was what is denominated polacca-rigged; a name given to designate those vessels which have their lower masts and topmast in one piece; thus evading the necessity of tops and caps, and much top-weight. Her yards were very square; her masts, which were polished, raked somewhat; her rigging was well set up, and very neat; and her canvas looked white and new. She was in truth a very rakish-looking and beautiful craft. As the speronara drew near, a boat was lowered from the brig and manned, and now came alongside.

As soon as the boat, which was full of armed men in the picturesque costume of Greek sailors, came alongside, Caramitzo turned to the padrone of the speronara: —

"Alessandro," he said, "your personal services to me are over, for the present; but I have occasion for the use of your vessel for a few hours longer. Do

you and your people go quietly on board the brig, and remain till my return. Some few of my followers will man the speronara in the mean time."

The padrone of the speronara would have expostulated, but the Greek cut him short, and intimated that, as just then his will was law, if he did not consent with a good grace, he would be compelled to do so — pointing at the same time to the boatload of desperadoes alongside. Seeing therefore that resistance was useless, the padrone and his crew were transferred to the brig, and thirty Greek seamen took their place. The exchange was made very rapidly, as their chief, for such he was whom we have known as Argiri Caramitzo, appeared in a hurry.

An officer, who seemed to have charge of the brig, came off in a smaller boat at the summons of the captain.

"Understand," he said, "you are, if possible, to keep the English brig, you see to the westward, just in sight; at, indeed, about the same distance we are now from her. Steer east-northeast, which is her course, and look out for the speronara. I am about to visit the brig, and may perhaps be able to render you a good account of her."

The officer bowed.

"I understand your orders clearly," he said. "We would rather, however, see you returning in the brig, than in the speronara."

"I will not forget your wishes," the chief answered laughing, as the boat shoved off.

"Now my men let draw the foresheet — now she has way on her — haul it well aft, and see if she will lay up for the brig yonder. Ah, she does it bravely — call me when we near her."

And wrapping himself in his cloak he lay down to sleep, or, it might have been, to meditate on the daring plans and projects working in his active brain. The speronara flew over the waves like a sea-bird on the wing. She soon neared the brig which Paolo at once recognised as the English merchantman they had passed in Valetta harbour. He had heard from the chief who were the passengers on board, and the ruse to be practised had also been confided to him. He had been endeavouring to beguile, to him, the weary hours of the voyage with reading, while the chief slept, for sleep refused to visit his eyelids. A thought seemed to strike him. He wrote hastily in the book, and tearing out the leaf, placed it in his bosom. He then roused his companion from his slumber. The Greek started up and eyed the approaching brig.

"It is she," he exclaimed. "That vessel, my men, is to be your prize; but much caution will be required to take her. She is armed, that is to say, she has four real guns and two wooden ones; but from what I saw of her captain and crew, I think they are likely to fight. They are very different sort of characters, are those English, to the Italians we are accustomed to deal with, who call on their saints to help them, and from the Turks, who make up their minds it is their fate to be taken and thrown overboard. The difficulty, on the contrary, with these English, is ever to persuade them that they are beaten; and, as they

don't care for the Saints, and don't fear the devil — heretics that they are — they trust to their own right arm, their cutlasses, and big guns; and by Achilles, if you do manage to throw them overboard, they will swim about in the hopes of getting a cut at you. Now, where we cannot succeed by force, we must employ stratagem; and I intend to go on board and to inform them that the Sea Hawk is an Austrian ship-of-war, anxious to protect merchantmen from the attacks of the corsair Zappa, and to revenge herself on him for his capture of one of their brigs of war, of which they will have heard. If I find them unprepared and unsuspicious of us, we will at once run alongside and take possession; and, as I am anxious not to be under the necessity of throwing the crew overboard, we will stow them all away in the hold of the vessel, and make the padrone carry them with him to Sicily. If he murder them on the voyage that will be no fault of ours; and if he lands them, they can be no evidence against us at any time, for they have not seen our brig, and Signor Sandro will not dare to give any correct information, though, of course, he will tell a number of lies to exonerate himself; but for that we are not to blame. Now we will heave to, to windward of our friend, and see the boat clear for launching, to carry me and Paolo on board her."

Having concluded his observations, the chief and Paolo went below, and soon returned so completely disguised in the costume of Sicilian boatmen, as I have described, that the Greeks at first scarcely knew them.

As they passed the brig, they hailed her, and then hove to. The pirate, for there is little use concealing the character of the pretended prince, with his young companion, whom he had instructed how to act, stepped into the boat, manned by two stout hands, and pulled alongside the brig. He was somewhat startled and disappointed on discovering the preparations which were made to receive him, should he appear as an enemy; and, seeing Colonel Gauntlett at the gangway, with whom he had held so much conversation on the previous day, it occurred to him at once that it might be dangerous to trust his own voice, and he therefore resolved to make Paolo the spokesman. His greatest trial, however, was to come, when, in the presence of Ada Garden, his countenance was exposed to the bright light of the cabin lamp. The admiration he had felt for her at the ball was increased when he beheld her again; but it was not so great as to make him forget that now was not the time to show it, and it was with some feeling of relief that he found himself once more in his boat, fully convinced that, even with his thirty men, it would be a work of considerable danger to attempt the capture of the Zodiac by means of the speronara. He accordingly determined to return on board the brig, dismiss the speronara, and keep a bright look out after the merchantman, till he should find a favourable opportunity to take her unawares. As the speronara sailed almost two feet to one of the Zodiac, he was soon able to pass her and to reach the polacca brig before she was discernible through the darkness. As the Greek stepped on the deck of the brig, the crew received him with a shout of welcome.

"Long life to our captain," they exclaimed. "Long life to Zappa."

The Prince Caramitzo or the pirate Zappa, for under either of those names that worthy person may in future be recognised, assured his followers of the satisfaction their affection afforded him, and then ordered them to tumble the Sicilians into their speronara, and to make all sail without delay.

The Sea Hawk was kept before the wind, and next morning, at daybreak, they found themselves still a long way ahead of the English brig. The pirates, who had on board a number of Austrian uniforms, and seamen's dresses, and flags, indeed every means of disguising the ship to appear like a man-of-war of that nation, now, by their chief's orders, set to work on the necessary preparations to make her assume that character, while Zappa himself appeared in the uniform of an Austrian captain.

His purpose was to dodge on, under easy sail, till the Zodiac came up with him; and then, under pretext of friendly converse, to run her alongside, and to pour his men on her decks before her crew should have time to make any resistance. The gale of wind, which so suddenly sprang up, prevented the execution of this plan, and preserved the Zodiac.

When Zappa observed her bearing down on him, he was in hopes that his ruse had succeeded, and that his vessel was taken for what he wished her to appear; but when he saw, on his following her, that the English brig made more sail in the very height of the gale, and at last carried on in a way that seemed even greatly to hazard her safety, he began to fear that he was suspected. He, however, was determined not to lose sight of her again, and accordingly made sail in chase, with the hopes of finding a favourable opportunity to execute his purpose at the termination of the gale. At length it fell calm, and his vessel lay about four miles from her.

We have seen that he was a man of extraordinary nerve, and he bethought him that he would try once more to blind the master and crew of the Zodiac, and, ordering a boat to be manned, he pulled boldly on board her. Had not Bowse been forewarned, there can be little doubt but that he would have triumphantly succeeded, and there can be no reflection on his want of talent either in planning or executing that he did not do so. Had he known as much as does the reader, he would probably have had nothing to do with the speronara, which was suspected, but would at once have run alongside the Zodiac in his own vessel which was unknown. When he found himself, on his second visit to the Zodiac, so nearly caught in his own net, he pulled back to the Sea Hawk, vowing that he would not again be foiled.

Chapter Thirteen.

The master of the Zodiac, as he laboured without ceasing at the important work of getting his ship once more in sailing trim, every now and then glanced at the pretended Austrian with feelings in which the undaunted courage of the British seaman were fearfully mingled in his bosom with dark forebodings as to the result of an engagement with an enemy in every respect so much his superior. His eye would also, ever and anon, range round the horizon in anticipation of those rising signs of the coming breeze, which he prayed Heaven might yet be long delayed till the work was completed, and then that it might come from the eastward, as it would thus give him the weather gage, and enable him to manoeuvre to better advantage in the coming fight; for he had already seen most convincing proof of the superior sailing qualities of the Sea Hawk; that he had no expectations of being able to avoid it, even should he be able to make sail before the arrival of the breeze. With voice and example, he cheered on his crew to the work; the topmast had been got up, and the rigging fitted over its head; but the topsail-yard was not yet across, and much remained to be done to make their previous labours of any avail. Bowse himself had taken his meals on deck, as had his mates; and the men had snatched but a minute to satisfy their hunger. He had just before sent them below to their dinners, when, as he was taking a look at the enemy, to see what she was about, he observed beyond her a dark blue line on the horizon.

"Ah," he muttered; "there's no doubt what is coming now, and long before the canvas is spread, we shall have the breeze blowing strong, and the brig coming down on us. Well, we've done our best, and men can do no more. I'll let the poor fellows have this meal in quiet; it will be the last many of them will eat, I fear. Ah! Heaven only knows if any on board here will ever taste another, if those cursed villains get hold of us — and nothing but a miracle can save us, that I see — yet, we'll make them pay dear for victory, at all events."

He took two or three turns on the deck, watching his antagonist, and the coming wind; and from his cool and calm exterior, no one would have supposed how fully he felt the dangerous position in which his ship was placed. Broader and broader grew the line, till, at last, the wind filled the loftier canvas of the corsair, which was spread to catch it. The time, he saw, was, come to prepare for the final struggle. He summoned the mate from below.

"Turn the hands up," he cried out, in a firm, sharp tone, to be heard throughout the ship. "We shall have work before long to warm them up a bit."

The men sprang on deck with alacrity, casting an eye at the stranger as they went to the work in hand.

The topsail-yard was ready fitted, and all hands now joined in swaying away on it. Meantime, the wind, though still light, had filled the pirate's sails, and she was stealing through the water towards them, before they even felt the

wind. At last a few catspaws, the avant-couriers of the stronger breeze, began to play round them. The foresail and the fore-staysail were the only sails they could yet get to pay the brig's head off before the wind. These were now set; but the so doing delayed the work of bending the topsail, and the Sea Hawk was now coming fast up with them. As soon as the Zodiac was got dead before the wind, the main-topsail and topgallant-sails were hoisted; the studdensail-booms were run out, and studdensails set, which much made amends for the loss of the headsails, as long as they desired only to keep before the wind. Notwithstanding, however, all the canvas the Zodiac could set, the corsair still came up with her hand over hand. Bowse watched till he thought she had come within range of his guns, and he then ordered one to be brought up, and pointed at her over the taffrail.

As soon as Colonel Gauntlett, who was on deck, heard the order given, he exclaimed that he and Mitchell would assist in working the guns, while the crew continued bending the sails.

The gun was accordingly trained aft, but part of the taffrail had to be cut away to work it.

"Try to knock away some of his spars, sir," cried Bowse, as the colonel prepared to fire. "Everything depends on that."

The colonel fired, but the shot fell short. The gun was instantly again loaded, but before they had time to fire, the pirate yawed and let fly a bow chaser, the shot from which flew through the main-topsail, though without doing further damage. The colonel again fired, but again the shot fell short, to his no slight rage.

"I see how it is, sir," observed Bowse, "that fellow has a long nine in his bows, while our gun is only a carronade. He will be doing us mischief, I am afraid."

"Let him get a little nearer though, and we will give him two to one," returned the colonel.

Scarcely had he spoken, when another shot came, which cut away the topmast starboard shrouds. Hands were immediately sent aloft to secure the rigging, but this again delayed the progress of the work on the foremast. Notwithstanding the occasional yaw the pirate was obliged to make in order to fire, he still gained on the Zodiac. At last he got within range of her carronades, to the great satisfaction of Colonel Gauntlett, who forthwith commenced firing his gun as fast as Mitchell could sponge and load it. The shot, however, told with little or no effect; a few holes were made through his head-sails, but no ropes of importance were cut away on board the Sea Hawk. The countenances of the pirates could now clearly be seen. They had exchanged the Austrian uniforms for their proper Greek dresses, which added considerably to the ferocity of their appearance.

Finding that the carronade frequently sent its shot on board, they hauled up a point, so as to bring their vessel on the starboard quarter of the Zodiac, and at the same time to keep beyond the range of her guns, while they could still send

the shot from their long bow chaser on board her.

The brave master groaned when he saw the manoeuvre, for he felt how completely he was at the mercy of the enemy. The colonel, notwithstanding, still continued working his gun, till with rage he saw that his shot again fell short of the enemy. The Zodiac, it must be understood, bearing chiefly after sail, could not venture to haul up so much as to bring the enemy again astern, or he would have tried to do so. His gun was worked quickly, and with great precision; shot after shot told with fearful effect on the spars and rigging. The men had perseveringly laboured the whole time in spite of the shot flying about them, but just as they had bent the fore-topsail, and were swaying away on the yard, a shot struck the fore-yard, and cut it completely in two. The men saw that their efforts were all in vain, and letting go the halyards, rushed of their own accord to the guns.

"It's no use running, sir," they exclaimed, with one voice. "Let's fight it out while we can."

The pirate's shot continued their work of destruction. The main topmast next received a wound, and in a minute afterwards, the breeze freshening, down it came on board, hampering up the deck.

"Clear away the wreck of the topmast, my lads," exclaimed the master. "And then I hope those scoundrels will give us a a chance of punishing them."

The order was obeyed, and the gun, which had been trained aft, was replaced, and the other two guns were got over to the starboard side. The brave crew then gave forth a cheer of defiance at the enemy, expecting that they were about to run them on board; the pirates were waiting, though, till their guns had produced more effect; a shot at last came, and carried away the peak halyards, and deprived her of all power of manoeuvring. The Zodiac was now at their mercy; and they bore down upon her; but instead of running her aboard on the starboard side, they luffed up when just under her stern, and poured in the whole of their starboard guns; then, keeping away again, they hauled up on the other tack joining their larboard battery, and then once more, as if content with their work, they kept away, and ran her on board on the starboard side.

Three of the Zodiac's crew had been disabled, and Bowse himself was badly wounded; but the remainder fought their guns to the last. The pirates, as the sides of the two vessels ground together, threw their grapnels on board, and crowded the rigging to leap on the deck of the Zodiac.

The master, and Colonel Gauntlett, led on the English crew to oppose the enemy — never did men fight better, but numbers bore them down — the struggle was in vain, the colonel was first struck down, and the master directly after, and though the two mates continued fighting some time afterwards, one being killed and the other wounded, the survivors gave way, and were either driven down below or overboard.

The tall figure of the pirate leader was the most conspicuous in the fight.

"The brig is ours!" he exclaimed, as he took up his post at the top of the companion steps. "But she is too slow a sailer to be of any use to us; we will

therefore take the most valuable part of her cargo on board, and desert her. We have no time to lose; for all this firing may have been heard by some British cruiser, who will be down upon us before long — Now, Paolo, follow me."

The pirate crew instantly got the hatches off, and set to work to select what they considered most valuable, and to transfer it to their own vessel.

Ada Garden had often read of tempests at sea, of shipwrecks, and battles; but it had never occurred to her that she might some day witness their horrors, or suffer from their dreadful effects. Now the reality of the scenes she had before pictured to herself, as events passed by, and unlikely again to happen, was palpably displayed before her. She had scarcely recovered from the terrors of the the storm when her uncle came below, and, with unusual tenderness in his manner urged her not to be alarmed at the noise of the guns which were about to be fired; at the same time speaking with confidence of their ultimate success. Though she trembled with anxiety at what she heard, she promised not to give way to fear, and entreated to be allowed to come on deck. To this he of course would on no consideration consent, and after much argument, and by showing her the useless danger she would run, he made her promise that nothing should induce her to leave the cabin till he himself came down to summon her. She again had recourse to her Bible, and, with Marianna sitting at her feet, she endeavoured to calm her mind, and to banish her terror as she had done during the gale. Except from the occasional discharge of the guns there was now, perhaps, much less to cause her alarm, if she could have helped thinking of the possible result; but this, notwithstanding her uncle's assurances, she could not do; for she understood too well the great superiority of the pirate vessel; and though she knew that her countrymen would struggle to the last, yet she felt that they might be overcome; and she scarcely dared to contemplate what her fate might be. The alarm of her young attendant was almost beyond control.

"Oh, Holy Mary!" she shrieked out, as the first shot was fired; "the dreadful battle has begun, and we shall be killed. Oh, why did we leave our dear Valetta, to come on the stormy sea, when one moment we are about to be drowned and the next murdered — ah me, ah me!" and the poor girl burst into tears. Another shot was heard, and she started and trembled afresh.

Ada tried to console her. "Listen now, Marianna," she said, "those shots are fired from this vessel, and, therefore, they cannot hurt us, though they may our enemies. It is only those which are sent from the other ship can injure us; as yet, none seem to have been discharged."

"May the saints prevent the wretches from sending any!" exclaimed Marianna through her tears. "Perhaps they will not fire on a British ship."

"Heaven grant it may be so," said Ada, "but I fear not. That sounds as if our ship had been struck."

It was the sharp sound of a spar being wounded, which, like an electric shock, reverberated through the vessel. Another and another followed.

"Oh, the enemy must be close to us! My dear, dear mistress, what is going to

happen?" shrieked the poor Maltese girl.

"Put your trust in Heaven, Marianna; and, though we are unable to discern it, the means may at the last moment be found for our preservation," said Ada solemnly. "I would that I were allowed to venture on deck, to learn that my uncle has not suffered in this dreadful fire."

"Oh, do not leave me, my mistress," exclaimed Marianna, clinging to her dress. "You will be killed, to a certainty, if you go up among all the fighting. No, you shall not go!"

Ada did not attempt to disengage herself, for she remembered her promise to Colonel Gauntlett, and she felt how worse than useless she would there be. Still louder and more frequent became the roar of the enemy's guns, and the crashes, as the spars and rigging came falling down on deck. Then came other frightful noises in quick succession, as the pirate poured in her two broadsides, and lastly the loud, grating sound, as she finally ran alongside, and the two vessels ground together as they lay locked in their deadly embrace. At the same instant arose the shouts of defiance raised by the British seamen, mingled with the shrieks of their wounded, and answered by the fierce cries of the pirates, as they threw themselves on the Zodiac's deck — next was heard above their heads the loud trampling of the feet of those engaged in mortal struggle. Sometimes Ada fancied that her friends were victorious, and that the pirates were driven back; then again, by the more frequent sound of the stamping of feet, and the cries and exclamations in a strange language, she felt too sure that the enemy had poured still greater numbers on board. For a few moments the noise of feet increased; there were next some heavy, dull sounds, as of persons falling, and then arose the loud triumphant shout of victory; but the sounds were strange — it was that of the enemy; all, then, for a time was silent — what had become of her uncle and the brave crew? With her heart palpitating, and her mind in a chaos of confusion, she could not resolve what to do. She could just discern the footsteps of persons descending the companion-ladder — they entered the main cabin. The door of the one in which she with Marianna sat was violently opened, and she beheld the countenance of the pirate Zappa. Too truly all then was lost. The excess of her horror and alarm overcame her and she fainted.

Chapter Fourteen.

When the first glimmerings of consciousness revisited the mind of Ada Garden, she felt that some dreadful calamity had befallen her, without being able to comprehend its nature or extent. An undefined terror, an insupportable oppression at the heart made her feel that death must soon release her from her sufferings. She had neither the power nor the will to stir a limb, or to open her eyes to discover her real state. The noise of the engagement and the thunder of the guns, the shrieks and cries of the combatants, still rung with fearful clearness in her ears, yet without enabling her to remember the causes which had produced them. She felt that she had been deprived of her only guardian — that she was alone in the world without friends to protect or counsel her; but how her uncle had died she could not comprehend. Then she thought she saw him sinking down into the deep blue sea, and his countenance was turned towards her with the smile it wore when he was pleased, and down, down he sunk till he reached the yellow sand at the bottom, where, through the clear water, she could see him resting, and beckoning her to raise him up; and then there seemed to pass a vessel full of strange, fierce forms, shrieking and mocking her; and whenever she stooped down to aid the old man, it would come between them and conceal him from her.

At last a deep-drawn sigh gave notice that she was returning to a consciousness of the dreadful reality. She opened her eyes with difficulty, and for an instant gazed round her, and then again closed them. That glance had revealed to her that she was no longer in her own cabin, though she still felt that she was at sea. For some time after this she remained with her eyes closed, trying to collect her scattered thoughts, till at last she remembered the fight with the Sea Hawk, and the appearance of Zappa at the door of her cabin.

The thoughts of what had occurred were almost sufficient to drive back her mind to a state of insensibility, if not to madness itself; but she felt that all the courage and energy she could muster were requisite for her guidance, and by a strenuous exertion of the intellect, she conquered the feeling which was so nearly overpowering her. Once more she opened her eyes, and tried to raise herself, that she might discover where she was.

The movement she made attracted the attention of some one who appeared to be occupied at a little distance from her, and who instantly flew to her side.

“Oh, my dear mistress, the saints have heard my prayers, and you have come to life again!” exclaimed the voice of Marianna, who immediately presented herself before her, with a countenance in which pleasure overcame every other feeling.

“Oh, tell me, where am I? What has happened?” exclaimed Ada, eagerly; but the exertion or excitement caused her again almost to faint.

“Hush, hush, my dear mistress,” whispered Marianna. “Do not be alarmed.

You are not in a condition to ask questions, nor to listen to my answers, so I shall say nothing. You have been very ill with a fever, and you are to take this medicine, which will do you much good."

As she spoke, she presented a glass, filled with a cooling beverage, which, as Ada felt very thirsty, and her mouth dreadfully parched, she gratefully drank off and lay back on her pillows.

She saw that she was in a large cabin, furnished and ornamented with much taste; and through the open stern-ports, from which a light pure breeze blew in and cooled her fevered brow, she saw the calm blue sea glittering in the sunshine, and in the far distance the land rising in picturesque hillocks from out of the water. While she was gazing at this calm and soothing scene, and meditating on the meaning of Marianna's words, she fell into a quiet slumber.

The Maltese girl watched her mistress till she saw that she slept, and then busied herself in putting the cabin in order, and in dusting the furniture, as if she were in a room on shore.

The cabin was, as has been described, in the after part of the vessel, and occupied its entire width. It was fitted up with bird's-eye maple, and the mouldings were gilt.

There were two large sofas, or standing bed-places, on either side, with brass bars overhead, by which a curtain could be drawn round them.

The space between the two ports was occupied by a rack, on which were arranged with much taste, a number of richly-embossed arms, pistols, swords, and daggers — and against the bulkhead was another stand, filled with muskets and cutlasses, brightly polished.

On the couch farthest from the door, on the starboard side, lay Ada; with her feet towards the stern, and her head supported by pillows; so that the full force of such air as could find its way through the ports should blow on her face. As she slept, a fresh bloom slowly crept over her cheek, which had hitherto been of a deathlike paleness, and as her faithful attendant watched its appearance, she hailed it as a sign of returning health.

In the centre of the cabin was a table on which now stood a large vase, filled with sweet-scented flowers, which spoke of the shore and civilisation. There was, indeed, in the arrangement of the cabin generally, a mixture of elegant luxury and warlike preparation, which gave it the appearance of the cabin of a yacht fitted for a voyage among savage or treacherous people. Whatever she was, Marianna seemed perfectly at home. Her work-basket was on the table, and various things belonging to it were scattered about; as were several articles of female apparel, which showed also that she considered the cabin sacred to her mistress and herself. When she had arranged everything to her satisfaction, she again sat down composedly to her work, and amused herself, as she plied her needle, by singing a song of her native island, in a tone, however, too low to run any risk of disturbing her mistress. After some time she got tired of singing, and then as some people are apt to do, who are fond of keeping their tongues going when they have nobody else to speak to, she began to talk to herself. She

did not raise her voice, it is true, above a whisper, but still it was sufficient to give exercise to that little fidgety occupant of the mouth.

"Well, this is all very nice, and very pleasant, and very agreeable; and the gentlemen are very civil, and very respectful, and very kind; but I wonder when we shall ever reach the shore," she said; and then she went on singing again, and then once more began to talk as follows: — "I suppose, as they say, we shall at last reach the shore, and everything will be as it should be, and my mistress will be happy and contented after all her troubles — poor dear, sweet, young lady — I'm sure she ought to be. Well, it does puzzle me, exceedingly — that it does — I cannot make it out, no more, I am sure, would wiser heads than mine. But there is one thing I am very sure of, that Signor Paolo is one of the wisest and most amiable young gentlemen I ever saw. So melancholy, too, he seems — something very dreadful weighs on his spirits, I am sure. I don't think he is in love — I thought so at first; but when I hinted that he was, he gave the nearest approach to a smile of which he is capable, which I'm sure he would not have done, if he was a victim of the tender passion. One thing is certain, however — he saved the life of my sweet young mistress. If it had not been for his knowing how to doctor, I'm sure she would have died — dear, dear, how sad it would have been — what would have become of me, too! Well, when she recovers, and I tell her all that has happened, I am sure she'll think the same of him that I do. When she does begin, she will be asking me so many questions — I wish that I could answer one half of them — first, she'll want to know what has become of the poor old gentleman, her uncle. Well, he certainly was a passionate, grumpy, sour old man as ever lived. Yet he had his good points — he had a kind heart, which made him do many a kind thing in his own rough way. He was generous, too, when he thought people deserving, and then he dotingly loved my young mistress, and intended to leave her all his money. What shall I tell her has become of him? I can tell her nothing; for I know no more than she does; or what has become of the brave Captain Bowse, or his polite mates, or even of that stupid long-legged fellow, Mitchell. I'm afraid, after the dreadful noise I heard, they must all long ago have gone to the other world. But to believe so would make my young lady sad, and would agitate her, and Signor Paolo says she must be kept quiet, so I will tell her I know nothing. Ah! that will be the safest plan."

While she was running on in this way, a gentle knock was heard at the door — she sprang up, and went to it cautiously.

"Who is there?" she asked.

"It is I, Paolo — may I enter?" answered a voice from without.

"Oh yes, indeed you may, Signor Paolo," she whispered through the keyhole, and at the same time withdrew the bolts from the door. As she did so she fancied she heard a bolt drawn slowly back outside. When the door opened, a young man entered, habited in the Greek costume, though his features were more like those of one born in Italy, as was the language he spoke.

"Has the lady yet awoke, and have you given her the potion I left for her?"

he asked in a cautious tone.

"Si, signor, she not only awoke, and drank up the draught, but she began to talk, and has now gone to sleep again," replied Marianna. "See how sweetly she sleeps."

The young man stepped across the cabin so that he might be able to see Ada's countenance.

He observed the slight roseate tinge which had visited her cheek, and her calm, quiet breathing.

"The lady does well," he whispered. "I will send you another draught to give her when she awakes, which she will not however do until towards the evening; and then, when she speaks, try to tranquillise her mind, and induce her again to sleep. The slightest agitation might be fatal to her."

"Oh, then, signor, I will tell her anything you advise," answered Marianna. "But I am much puzzled what to say; and I want you to tell me, among many other things, where we are going; because I know that will be one of the first questions she will ask me, and I'm sure I can't answer it."

The young man hesitated before he spoke.

"Tell her," he said, at last, "that we are going to a place where she will be kindly and honourably treated; but that you know not the name of it. I am not the commander of this vessel, nor can I direct her course; and I am not allowed to say more than I have."

"Oh, but you have great influence with him who is commander; and you can make him do what you like, I am sure," urged the Maltese girl.

"Indeed, I cannot," answered the young man, mournfully. "My influence extends but a short way, and can be but rarely exerted in the cause of right. Were I to attempt too much, I should become altogether powerless."

He stopped, as if he had said too much, and seemed about to leave the cabin. He again, however, went up to Marianna, and whispered — "It may be better for your mistress and yourself that she remain as if overcome with illness till the conclusion of the voyage. Urge her not to rise, or to attempt to go on deck; and tell her that the leech who has attended her, has prescribed perfect silence and calmness. You understand me?"

"I do, signor — though I cannot comprehend your reasons," returned Marianna. "But, at all events, you can tell me when the voyage is to be brought to a conclusion. It has lasted already a long time. I did not think the Mediterranean sea was so large."

"Even there I cannot satisfy you," returned he who was called by Marianna Signor Paolo. "Certainly not for many days; it may be even for some weeks. You observe, that we do not always continue sailing. We visit the shore occasionally, and, sometimes, remain hours together at anchor."

"I cannot say exactly that I discovered that," answered the girl. "I thought sometimes the ship appeared to sail very slowly, and that we were very near the shore; but I knew not that we were altogether at rest. Yet I cannot understand why you should not tell me where we are going to."

“Perhaps I myself do not know,” returned Paolo evasively. “The commander of this ship does not always say where he will next steer.”

“There again — who is your commander?” asked the girl. “It is strange you should not have told me his name.”

“You are much too curious, Marianna,” answered Signor Paolo. “I must again warn you to prevent your mistress from asking questions, which you cannot answer; and now I must leave you, for the present; for I dare not remain long at a time here.”

Saying this, to the great disappointment of Marianna, who had made up her mind to enjoy a long chat, he took his departure; and she bolted and locked the door behind him — saying, as she did so, “I will do as he tells me, at all events; and, as I may not go out, no one else shall come in without my leave.”

The bright rays of the sun were streaming through the stern-ports, and glittering on the arms and the gilt mouldings of the bulkheads, when Ada Garden again awoke. Her eyes were dazzled by the bright refulgence which they encountered, and almost blinded, she closed them, till Marianna bethought of drawing the curtain across the foot of her couch. In so doing she saw that her mistress was awake.

Now, although the glare of the sunlight had disturbed Ada’s slumbers, it had had the beneficial effect of imparting somewhat of its brightness to her spirits; and instead of the gloomy oppression which she had before experienced, she now felt a glow of hope circling round her heart; and she was fully prepared to credit the favourable account of the state of affairs which Marianna was about to give her as soon as she was questioned.

“Where am I — what has happened?” she asked, endeavouring to sit up.

“You must take another draught before I am at liberty to tell you anything, my dear signora,” answered Marianna, bringing her the goblet which Paolo had sent. She drank the cooling mixture, and it served still further to revive her. “Now let me arrange your pillows, and I will tell you all you want to know,” said the faithful girl, arranging her couch. “There, now you are comfortable! Well, first, we are with very kind, considerate people, who do everything I wish; and we are as safe as we can be on board ship — though I wish ships had never been invented; then we are going to a very beautiful place — though, when we are to get there depends on the wind and other circumstances, which I am not clever enough to explain.”

She was running on in this style, when Ada cut her short by abruptly asking —

“Where is my uncle? Is he on board? Why does he not come to me?”

“Ah! there are some little mysteries which I cannot explain just now, and that is one of them,” promptly returned Marianna. “The signor colonel is not on board the ship, nor is the good Captain Bowse — they all went away in the other one; and we — that we might be much safer — we came on board this one. Here we are, and here we must remain, till you, my dear signora, can get well enough to go on shore; but there is no hurry, for we could not be better off than we are

now. So, as you have asked a great many questions, which your doctor said that if you did I was not to answer, yet I have done so, you must try and go fast asleep again, and forget all about it."

Ada was still too weak, she discovered, to talk; and her mind had not either sufficiently recovered its clearness to perceive the glaring evasiveness of her servant's replies; so, satisfied that her apprehensions of danger were groundless, she amused herself by examining the fittings of the cabin, and by watching through the open ports the magnificent effect of the setting sun, which now just dipping in the water, seemed to convert the whole ocean into a sheet of liquid gold. She thus discovered that the ship was steering an easterly course, from which she concluded that she was still on her voyage to Cephalonia.

Two more days passed away, and served to restore to Ada Garden her strength both of mind and body, though the uncertainty of the past and present, and painful anticipations for the future, much retarded her complete recovery.

In vain she questioned Marianna. Her lively attendant knew but little — and even that, she had been taught, it would be beneficial to her mistress to conceal. The young Italian had once entered the cabin while she was awake, and had felt her pulse, in order to be better able to prescribe for her, but had remained not a moment longer than was absolutely necessary in her presence. She resolved, however, the next time he came to detain and question him; for the description given of him by Marianna, already made her place confidence in him. She had not long to wait for an opportunity; for that evening, just before sunset, his knock was heard at the cabin doors, and with the usual caution he entered.

"How is your mistress?" he asked of Marianna. "Does she feel stronger?"

"She is awake to answer for herself," returned the Maltese girl, "and will gladly speak to you."

The young man started — he had so generally found her unconscious, that he seemed not to have expected to find her able to question him. He, however, crossed the cabin and stood with his arms folded, leaning against the bulkhead, where she could not observe his countenance. Ada was the first to speak.

"I am glad you have come, signor," she said, in a low tone; "for I am anxious to express my gratitude to you for the attention with which, as my maid tells me, you have treated me during my illness, and to which I feel sensible I am much indebted for my recovery."

"Lady, I have but performed the duty in obedience to the order of another," he replied, in a tone so calm that it sounded almost cold to her ear. "I found you suffering, and I have employed what knowledge I possess of the healing art to restore you to health. I rejoice to find that my efforts have not been totally unavailing."

"To you, at all events, my gratitude is due," returned Ada. "And I would lay myself under a still further obligation, by asking you to tell me what ship I am

on board, how I came here, and to where I am being conveyed?"

The Italian hesitated, as if he was framing an answer, which Ada remarked to herself. At last he replied, — "Lady, your first question I may answer. You are on board a man-of-war belonging to the patriot Greeks, who are struggling for their liberty against the infidel Turks; and you are in possession of the commander's cabin. How you came here I am less able to inform you, and thus much only, further, I know, that we are sailing for one of the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, where you will be landed, and placed with those who will tend you carefully. Lady, I regret that I cannot tell you more."

The suspicions of Ada were much increased on hearing these words.

"I believe that you, signor, would not willingly deceive me," she observed. "The very tone of your voice forbids the supposition. But tell me, as the Greek patriots are on friendly terms with the English, should I desire to be placed on board a British ship-of-war, of which I believe there are several in these seas, would not your commander comply with my wishes?"

"The commander of this ship is anxious to do all he can to gratify you, lady; but to do as you wish may not be in his power."

"Signor," said Ada, glancing at his features. "I have heard that voice before. You speak Italian well; but so do many Greeks. Tell me, are you the commander of this ship?"

"Lady, I am not," returned the young man emphatically. "I am but acting as the surgeon of the ship, to soothe the anguish of those who are wounded. I have no authority on board."

"Then why does not the commander visit me?" said Ada, "I would see him and urge my request to be placed under the protection of the British flag. Surely he would not refuse to do so."

"Oh, lady, do not ask to see him," exclaimed the Italian, forgetting his cold reserve and previous caution. "You know not what misfortune you may bring on yourself by so doing. He believes that you are now sick, almost to death, and that your only chance of restoration to health is rest and quiet on shore."

"You speak in enigmas," said Ada, quickly taking alarm. "Surely the commander of a man-of-war would not detain an English lady against her will; and my having recovered would make him still more anxious to enable me to return to my friends."

The Italian stood for some minutes lost in thought.

"You know not lady how you came to be on board this vessel," he said. "You now compel me to tell you. Your attendant informs me that the ship in which you sailed from Malta was attacked by a corsair, and captured; but that you and she were the only persons conveyed on board the pirate vessel; and that you, having fainted during the engagement, were unconscious of all that took place. It appears that for a short time only you remained on board the pirate, still in a happy state of unconsciousness of the misfortune which had befallen you, when we caught sight of the ship, chased, and captured her. You and your attendant were found on board, respectfully treated, and in possession of the chief cabin.

This was a suspicious circumstance, for who could tell that you were not willingly on board."

"Ah!" exclaimed Ada, almost smiling at the atrocious supposition. "Surely no one could believe that I was acting in consort with pirates?"

"Lady, I do not; but all may not so readily believe the truth," returned the Italian.

"But am I and my innocent attendant then to be punished as pirates," asked Ada, with a hysterical laugh.

"Scarcely so, lady; but you may be required to give evidence against them," returned the Italian.

"I can give no evidence against them," said Ada; "for, as you have been informed, I have been deprived of consciousness since I was found on board the English brig."

"The observation you make, lady, is much in your favour," remarked the Italian in a low tone.

"Then I am to understand," continued Ada, not noticing it, "that I am, with an attendant, a prisoner in this cabin."

"So I am compelled to confess, with much regret, is the case," replied the surgeon.

"Then I understand it all," she ejaculated, compressing her lips, and fixing her eyes upon the young man, who had advanced a few paces to the after part of the cabin. "From man I can expect no aid, — Heaven will not desert me."

"Lady, God never deserts those who trust in him," he replied, about to quit the cabin.

"Stay," exclaimed Ada. "Those features, too, I have beheld before. Tell me where it was I saw you?"

"Lady, fancy often strangely deceives us," returned the surgeon, in his former cold tone, and before she had time to ask another question, he had quitted the cabin.

She, as Marianna had before observed, heard a bolt drawn across it.

On board what vessel they were there might be a doubt; but there was none that they were prisoners.

Chapter Fifteen.

Malta lay basking on the calm blue ocean, in the full radiance of a mid-day sun, hot, white, and dazzling, when Her Majesty's brig Ione made her number in the offing, approaching the port from the northward. It was observed at the signal station at the top of Government House, and from thence telegraphed to the guard-ship. At the same time another sail appeared from the eastward. She soon was made out to be a merchantman. Both had a fair wind. The brig of war stood in for the harbour on a bowline, her yards braced up on the larboard tack; and a very beautiful object she appeared, with all her canvas to her royals set to a nicety, as she rounded Fort Saint Elmo, and then kept away a little and run to her former anchorage, when, at a wave of her commander's hand, as if by magic, the whole crowd of canvas was in an instant clewed up and furled, and she brought up off Fort Saint Angelo. The merchant brig, which had the yellow flag flying, ran towards Port Marsa Musceit, and deliberately furling one sail after another, she dropped her anchor at the quarantine station, for she had come from the land of the plague, and many a day must pass before she could get pratique. Captain Fleetwood ordered his gig and hastened on shore, in order to report himself and to deliver his despatches to the governor. He had just returned from a trip to Naples, where he had been sent to convey despatches and also to bring back a few casks of light wines for the governor's table. He was cordially received by the old veteran, with whom he was a favourite. He was just taking his departure when he was called back.

"It may be for your satisfaction to learn, Captain Fleetwood, as I know that you are in a hurry to reach England, that you are to be sent home immediately with despatches and the mails," said the governor kindly. "I dare say we shall see you out here again before long, from what I hear, eh?" Charles Fleetwood actually blushed.

"I shall certainly come back to the Mediterranean, with or without a ship, as soon as I can," he answered; "and I hope I shall find you well, sir."

"I shall be glad to see you, my lad, and I wish ye every success," said the old governor kindly, as Fleetwood took his final leave. On his way back to the ship he called at the post-office, for he was anxious to ascertain, without delay, if there were any letters for him. He hoped to receive one from Cephalonia. He felt sure Ada would have contrived to write to him; and as he made the inquiry his heart beat much faster than usual. He had a packet of letters delivered to him; he ran his eye hurriedly over the addresses. Her handwriting was not to be seen. They were all from England. He then made every inquiry in his power from the shipping agents and others about the Zodiac; but nothing had been heard of her. It was supposed she must long ago have arrived at her destination. None of Colonel Gauntlett's friends had heard of him. Disappointed and out of spirits, he at last returned on board. He was afraid that he should be obliged to

leave Malta without hearing of her safe arrival; and then how many months might pass away before he might receive a line from her. He did not, however, forget that others would be glad to hear that they were to revisit their homes, and as he passed Mr Saltwell, the first lieutenant, who was superintending the business of sending the governor's casks of wine on shore, he told him to prepare for sailing to England in a day or two. Before the captain had thrown himself on the sofa in his cabin, which he did as soon as he reached it, the joyous news had flown through the ship. Jemmy Duff was the first to carry the news into the midshipmen's berth.

"Huzza, my lads!" he exclaimed, whisking round his cap, and letting it come down over the eyes of Togle, another youngster of his own standing, who was reeling after the fatigue of furling sails, and eating his dinner, — "Old England for ever! Who'll bet that we shan't be kissing our sweethearts at home this day six weeks?"

"Why, what do you mean?" cried several, looking up.

"Who'll take my bet?" replied Duff.

"Why, I will," answered Togle, who did not like being disturbed, clearing his head at the same time from the cap. "I will, because I don't think such an ugly-looking chap as you are can have a sweetheart to kiss."

Whereon he got the cap pressed down harder than before, with his nose in a slop of rum-and-water on the table.

"But what makes you sing out in that way?" asked Tompion, the second mate. "You don't mean to say that we are homeward-bound, youngster?"

"I do, though; and the skipper has just come on board to say so," replied Duff; and thereon there was a general shout of congratulation, for though all hands were very happy together, the thought of change was exciting, and that of home was dear to most of them.

"Well, the hope of the Duffs will be once more pressed to the maternal bosom. I congratulate you, Jemmy," said Togle, who was trying to get his own nose in order, after its flattening in more senses than one, by putting that of his antagonist out of joint a little.

"Well, now we've had our cheer, and have all been flattering ourselves with the thoughts of home, I'm ready to take any bet Duff likes to make that we shall not be in England this day six weeks, or two months, if he likes, for I believe, after all, it's a hum of his; and I propose we cob him as a punishment for deceiving his Majesty's liege subjects and gallant officers as he has done."

"I can prove, though, that I speak the truth," exclaimed Jemmy, who saw the day turning against him. "Any one of you go and ask Mr Saltwell. He heard it from the captain, I tell you."

"No, no," put in Togle. "Punishment first and proof afterwards. That's the way the Turks manage, and they are sensible people. You can take the cobbing first, and then go and ask Mr Saltwell, or the skipper himself, if you like."

"You go and be d — d, Togle," retorted Duff. "You know well enough that I'm speaking the truth; and mind, old chap, I shall keep you to your bet, — two

months, you said."

"I made no bet," answered Togle. "You offered to bet yourself, but you didn't propose what it should be, — a dinner at the Star, or — "

Just then a personage appeared at the door of the berth, who was immediately appealed to.

"Oh! come in here, Muhajiar; you'll know all about it," cried Jack Raby. "Take a glass. We haven't seen you for some time. Have you heard whether we are going home?"

"So the purser's steward told me, gentlemen, and it is generally believed throughout the ship," returned the individual addressed, who entered with such a bow as he could contrive to find room to make, and took his seat at the table, where with much gusto he drank off the porter offered to him. He was a stout, tallish man, with a good expression of countenance, and most of those who remember Malta in those and even later days, will recollect him as one of the most respectable tailors in the place. He had been, I believe, in the marines; but getting his discharge, set up for himself as a builder of garments, and soon managed to establish a very thriving business. He was always on the watch, and the moment a ship dropped her anchor he would come on board to take orders. He knew everybody and everything that was going forward, and was, consequently, a great authority.

"Huzza! it is true, for Paolo Muhajiar has heard it," exclaimed Togle, looking hard at Duff. "Well, Jemmy, I'll let you off your bet — but you will see that I am right."

Signor Paolo Muhajiar took his leave, for he was not likely to get any orders, at all events, to be paid, if he executed them; and the berth was soon cleared of its rightful occupants — some to go on shore, others to their duties, and the rest to see what was going forward in the harbour.

The scene there was amusing. There were boats of all sorts and descriptions alongside; but there is one peculiarity of which Valetta may boast, to the disadvantage of nearly all other ports. The boats intended for the conveyance of passengers are kept in good order, and beautifully clean; and the boatmen belonging to them are also very careful to dress neatly — their linen always looking as white as snow. Some of the boats alongside had goats on board, and the aquatic goat-herds were offering to milk them to supply milk for the officers' tea. It is not a bad way to secure pure milk.

The three mids of the Ione — Jack Raby, Duff, and Togle — were on the poop leaning over the quarter-rail, and amusing themselves by discussing affairs in general, and watching the panorama round them, when a boat with two thin, slight lads pulled out of the dockyard creek.

"He for dive, signor," sung out one of them, looking up at our mids.

"He says he'll bet you he'll dive to the bottom and be back again sooner than you will, Togle. So overboard with you, and show him he's wrong," said Duff, trying to heave over his messmate.

"He says he'll bring up a shilling if you heave it overboard," answered Togle,

retaliating by seizing the first coin he could lay hands on out of Master Jemmy's waistcoat pocket — it was fortunately only half-a-crown. "There, Smaitch, it's too much for one of you though, so both of you be after it."

And holding it up to show, before Duff could snatch at it, it was glancing through the clear water of the harbour. Over went both the lads after it, eager to appropriate so rich a prize, and it is to be feared, had they had knives, they would have fought for it under the waves, and have neither of them returned. Luckily Duff, as he could not save his own coin, had managed to seize a shilling from Togle, which served to attract the attention of the one who was furthest from the great prize, and both of them came up to the surface an instant afterwards, with the pieces of money in their hands.

"Me for dive, signor — me for dive," they both again sung out, hoping to get another coin from Raby.

"No, no more me for dive, you blackguards," he answered, shaking his head. "You've had quite enough from these two Master Greens already."

And the lads, after singing out a few more times, pulled on ahead, still crying, "Me for dive, signor; me for dive;" though little, beyond a few pence, did they get from the crew of an old Mediterranean cruiser like the Ione.

"Now suppose there were sharks here as they have in the West Indies, it would not be quite so easy to go overboard as it is," observed Duff, who quickly recovered his temper, which he had lost with his half-crown.

"Oh, these fellows would laugh at a shark," answered Raby. "Why even the blackies don't fear them, and will attack and kill the largest. By the by, did you ever hear of the big fellow they keep in Port Royal harbour to do the duty of guard-boat? Not a man dares swim on shore when big Tom is on duty, and he never takes a snooze they say."

"You don't mean to say so," said Togle, "but how do they manage to keep him there?"

"Oh, the Government promised him a superannuated pension when he's no longer fit for work; but, as he finds he must go on shore to receive it, he is obliged to keep afloat; though he's been so many years at it that no one remembers when he first came on the station."

"He must be a rum old joker," observed Duff. "Hillo, here comes old Monsieur Collet with his cargo of ginger-beer. Let's go and get some; for I'm very thirsty."

And away they all three scrambled to the gangway, to which a boat had come with a little wizened old man in her, and laden with bottles of ginger-beer, and other refreshing drinks.

"Hand us up ginger-beer there," sung out Jemmy Duff. "But, I say, Monsieur Collet, remember, no pop — no pay."

"Oh, no, signor. All my ginger-beer pop very much."

And, to prove the truth of his assertion, off went half a dozen of his bottles fizzing away together; some, however, remained, and the old Frenchman insisted on himself cutting the lashings of the corks to give full effect of the

pop. He would then put a far from clean thumb over the mouth to prevent the liquid from escaping; but still the froth would fiz and fume round it.

"Thank ye, Monsieur Collet, none of your digitalis for me," remarked the assistant surgeon, who observed the operation, which, however, few others seemed to care for.

The attention of the idlers was soon drawn off from old Collet, and his refreshing draughts, towards a boat which pulled alongside, filled with musicians, who if they produced sounds not especially harmonious, took care that they should be loud enough to be heard far and wide.

"Huzza for the Banjee," sung out some of the men forward. "Come, Smaitch, tip us a tune there — Go ahead, Banjee!" and on this requisition the performers in the Banjee boat began to exert their talents to the great delight of their hearers, who rewarded them with showers of pence. Not, however, of this character are the principal Banjee boats; which really contain very good musicians, who enliven the harbour with their sweet harmony, and are often some of the best performers from the Opera House. Valetta harbour is in truth as lively and animated, as interesting and picturesque a sheet of water as is to be found in any part of the world. On the north side of where the ship lay were the dazzling white walls of the city towering towards the blue sky, with the Marina below them, and numerous vessels moored along the quays; on the other side the frowning batteries of Fort Saint Angelo, and the Venetian looking canal, called Dockyard Creek; many of the houses having doors cut through the rock opening down to the water, the whole wearing an aspect more Oriental than European. Then the boats, darting about in every direction, mostly painted bright green and yellow, with upright sterns rising high above the gunnel, and great big eyes painted on the bows — very often having the name of some ship or other on them in addition.

And the boatmen, with their long red or blue caps, the tassel reaching to their waists, their gay waistcoats, their shirt-sleeves rolled up above their elbows exhibiting their brawny arms, their red sashes, their blue overall trousers, and their nankeen ones below, are not unworthy of remembrance. But the most picturesque objects are the lateen sails with their long tapering yards either wing and wing when skimming along before the wind, or heeling over when close-hauled upon it.

Such in part was the scene viewed from the deck of the Ione.

Captain Fleetwood sat meditating in his cabin. He had read all his letters from home. They contained nothing that was not satisfactory, and yet his thoughts were far from cheerful. He was out of spirits at not hearing from Ada; from being unable to gain any information about her. He, however, had received no positive orders for sailing, and he trusted that tomorrow or the following day some vessel from Cephalonia might arrive, and bring a letter for him; still his heart would sink with forebodings of ill, when he recollected the suspicions he had entertained, and the warnings he had given to Bowse respecting the speronara and her crew. A man who is in love, when he is absent from the

object of his affections, is certainly very much to be pitied, if he has the slightest particle of imagination; for he is sure to employ it in conceiving that all sorts of misfortunes and miseries, and disasters, are befalling her.

He was aroused from his meditations by a message from the governor, requesting to see him immediately, on urgent business. He sprang up, put on his cocked hat, buckled to his sword-belt, and ordering his gig to be manned, pulled on shore as fast as he could, and toiled upwards, by steps innumerable, to the governor's palace.

"Ye will be surprised, doubtless, Captain Fleetwood, at my sending for ye again to-day," said the governor, in a kind tone, as he entered. "But sit down, mon, sit down and rest yourself, for I have a very extraordinary communication to make to ye, which I cannot fail to think will agitate ye; and I therefore considered it advisable to speak to ye on the subject myself."

"For Heaven's sake tell me what it is, sir," exclaimed Fleetwood, who, on first entering, had seen that something was wrong; and his fears having already pointed all round the compass, he had settled that it was in some way connected with Ada Garden.

"Ye must be calm and tranquil, mon, in a case like this; for ye will require all your judgment and discretion to discover the means of accomplishing your object;" continued the governor, not noticing the interruption. "And as I considered ye a mon in every way calculated for the purpose I have in view, and, moreover, particularly suited, from other reasons, which ye yourself will allow, I instantly made application to employ you on it." Fleetwood almost groaned. He could not again venture to interrupt the governor, though he was bursting with impatience to have his fears relieved or confirmed. "Well, I see ye wish to be informed on the subject, which is very natural, Captain Fleetwood; and, therefore, I must premise that I have this day received notice of the arrival of a brig, a merchantman from Smyrna, and that she is now performing quarantine in Port Marsa Musceit. Her master has written a statement which has been forwarded to me; and which, if correct, and I see no reason to doubt it, proves that further efforts are required to put down piracy and robbery and murder in these seas; and by — they shall not be wanting as long as I'm ruler here."

"Well, sir; well, sir," ejaculated Fleetwood.

"But ay, the statement. It is to the effect that the brig Mary Jane, William Jones master, on her voyage from Smyrna to Malta, did in latitude ... degrees north, longitude ... degrees — ms., sight the hull of a vessel dismasted. That not lying much out of her course, she hauled up for her; and on a nearer approach she appeared to be water-logged, by her lowness in the water, and the heavy way in which she rolled; that on getting close to her, the Mary Jane was hove to, and a boat lowered into the water, into which the first mate and a boat's crew got, and pulled on board her. It appears that the mate, when he first got alongside, thought that she had been brought into her present condition by a storm, from the appearance her shattered bulwarks presented; but that, climbing up her side, she found a number of shot-holes, and round-shot

sticking in them, and her spars and rigging lying about the decks, evidently destroyed by shot. He therefore came to the conclusion that she had been hotly engaged with an enemy of very superior force, as she herself only carried four guns; and it would require a large number, or else very rapid firing, for a long time, to send so many into her as he observed. He soon discovered that there was no human being alive on board her; but on more minute examination, he was of opinion, from the state of the decks, that there had been some severe fighting, and a number of people killed on them. All the bodies, however, had been thrown overboard. The hold of the ship had been ransacked, was almost empty, as were the cabins, which had evidently been fitted up for passengers, and there were a few articles of female gear scattered about, which made him suppose that there had been ladies on board."

"Great Heaven!" ejaculated Captain Fleetwood, starting up. "The name, sir — the name?"

"The name is just what the mate had considerable difficulty himself in discovering; for, you see, the master had a fancy to have it painted so low under the counter, that it could not be seen, sunk deep in the water as the ship now was. At last, however, one of the men who accompanied him, found a book with the name of Bowse in it, which he concluded to be that of the master."

"The same," groaned poor Fleetwood. "It was the Zodiac. She is lost — lost to me for ever. Oh, Ada, Ada!"

And again he groaned, as if death could alone relieve his heart from his load of misery.

"Hoot, mon, hoot! ne'er say die while there's life!" exclaimed the bluff old governor. "Ye have no positive proof that any one ye care for is dead or lost to ye. I tell ye, the mate of the Mary Jane found no one dead on board the vessel; and, as she had no boats remaining, it is just a plausible supposition that the survivors of the crew and the passengers may have escaped from the ship they thought was sinking in one of them; and we may hear of your friends turning up somewhere or other; for I do not pretend to deny that, when I first received notice of the outrage, I felt convinced that my friend, Colonel Gauntlett and his bonnie niece were among the sufferers."

"Too true, they were, sir," replied Fleetwood, by a great effort, endeavouring to collect his thoughts for active service.

"It was that supposition, and not ignorant also of your attachment to the young leddie, which made me resolve to apply, instanter, that the Ione might be sent in the first place to search for the crew and passengers of the late brig the Zodiac; for I ought to say, she sank while the Mary Jane was yet close to her; and then, it will be gratifying and soothing to your feelings, under the circumstances, to chastise the miscreants who have perpetrated this atrocity — and I do not suppose, Captain Fleetwood, that ye will be disposed to spare them more than I should."

And the grim old soldier gave a look which indicated no inclination to be lenient.

"We will hang every mother's son of them; and teach other villains that these seas can no longer be made the field for the exercise of their marauding disposition. Ye understand, Captain Fleetwood — ye may take them alive if ye can; but ye may sink, burn, and destroy them all, sooner than let one escape."

"I comprehend, sir, clearly," answered Fleetwood. "When can I sail?"

"I am expecting your orders every instant," replied the governor. "It is a considerate change of destination, to be sure; but I knew the duty would be gratifying to you; and, fortunately, your brig is the only vessel on the station fit to be sent on it, while the despatches can go home by the Racehorse as well. Sit quiet a few minutes till the orders arrive; and I will in the mean time glance my eye over a paper I have to read."

Captain Fleetwood threw himself back in his seat, and covered his eyes with his hands. The old governor, who had purposely been more circumvolute even than usual, in order not too suddenly to shock his feelings, looked up at him with a kind expression, which showed that he truly entered into his wretchedness.

"I have been considering, sir," said Fleetwood, suddenly looking up, "what clue can be found of the pirates' places of retreat; for, if they did not destroy those on board the Zodiac, I feel sure that they will have carried them off."

"Ah! that is the proper spirit with which to meet a misfortune," exclaimed the governor, rising and placing his hand on Fleetwood's shoulder. "Look it in the face, and think how you can best overcome it. You deserve to succeed — and you will succeed, mon, I am sure. Well, as to the clue, that is an important consideration, which must be thought of."

Captain Fleetwood remained some time longer in consultation with the governor. His orders, which had been sent up to the palace, were handed to him, and with them in his pocket he hurried on board.

"Mr Saltwell," he said, as he ascended the side, "hoist the blue-peter, and take every means of getting all hands on board. We sail to-night for the Levant. I shall be happy to see you as soon as convenient in the cabin."

"Ay, ay, sir," mechanically answered the first lieutenant, who, as he looked at his commander, at first thought that he had gone out of his mind; but he soon saw that something extraordinary had happened to cause this sudden change in their destination, and without stopping further to consider what it was, he took the necessary steps to obey the orders he had received. The announcement, as might have been expected, created, at first, no little dissatisfaction and disappointment throughout the ship, but that was before any one was aware of the reasons of the change. Mr Togle was the first of the midshipmen to hear the news, and down he rushed into the berth, where most of his messmates were collected.

"You've lost your bet, Jemmy," he exclaimed, giving Duff a slap on the shoulder. "Instead of going to England we're bound for the Levant, old fellow; so fork out. You betted a dinner at the Star, didn't you?"

"Well, suppose I believed your humbug," answered Duff, "I'm ready to give

you a dinner at the Star; but if we don't go to England, I'm sure I don't know how you are to eat it; so I've done you, old fellow!"

Thereon the discussion grew warm, as to how a bet under such circumstances should be settled, no one believing Mr Togle's assertion of their change of destiny. It was interrupted by the shrill pipe of the boatswain's whistle, and the hoarse cry of —

"All hands, unmoor ship," which echoed along the decks.

"There's something in the wind, any how," exclaimed Jack Raby, as they all jumped up to hurry to their stations.

"I told you so," said Togle. "We shall have plenty of adventures before we again see old England, depend on it."

Chapter Sixteen.

There is in the northern portion of the Grecian Archipelago — and, from being out of the usual track of vessels, little known even to the modern voyager, and in the days of which I write still less so — a small island called by the mariners of those regions the Island of Lissa, though I am not aware under what name it appears in the English charts. In extent it is five or six miles long, and from two to three broad; its lofty sides rise in most places as rocky precipices from out of the blue ocean, and only on the southern side can anchorage-ground be found. It appears, on sailing round it at a short distance off, to be a barren, inaccessible rock — a fit abode only for the wild sea-fowl which may be seen hovering round it. Its aspect, on approaching nearer, alters, and here and there a pathway, cut in zig-zag down the rock, may be discerned; and at one spot on the north, which appears at first to be a mere crevice in the rock, to the seaman who steers boldly towards it, an opening is revealed between the lofty cliffs, so narrow that the yards of a ship might touch either side, yet with the water so deep that one of large tonnage may enter, and find herself in a beautiful basin surrounded with a fringe of yellow sand — lofty rocks, of many hues, rising on every side, with a deep ravine running up into the interior, its sides also equally rugged and precipitous. Neither tree nor shrub can be seen in this wild but picturesque spot: rock, water, sand, and sky, are the only component parts of the landscape. At the time I speak of a few small light boats were drawn up on the beach, and two crafts of considerably larger size lay moored in the basin or cove. They were long, low vessels, entirely decked over, and fitted to pull some twenty oars; they had thick stumpy masts, and long tapering yards, for lateen sails, now stowed fore and aft in the boats. The sails were bent, the oars being placed along the thwarts, and they wore an air which showed they would be ready for sea at a moment's notice.

There was somewhat a wicked look about them, at the same time they might belong to peaceable fishermen; for there were several nets hung up on poles along the shore, and at times a few old men might be seen mending them or cleaning the boats. The chief communication between the cove or basin I have described and the interior of the island was by a narrow pathway, which ran along near the bottom of the ravine for some distance, and then, turning to the right with many a zig-zag, led along the edge of deep precipices till it reached the summit of the cliffs. At the very bottom of the ravine leaped and sparkled a bright, clear rivulet, the only stream in the island. It might be seen far up, indeed, at what might be called the head of the ravine, rushing forth from between two cliffs, and bounding down a fall of two or three hundred feet in a mass of glittering foam.

One of the wildest and most inaccessible spots in the island was in that portion to the right, or east of the cove — the point of land, indeed, formed by it

and the sea, and bounded on the north by the ravine. The only access to it from the rest of the island was from the north-east by a narrow neck of land, with the sea-cliffs on one side and those of the ravine on the other.

This wild and rugged spot had been selected centuries ago, when the then powerful republic of Venice held sway over considerable territories in those seas, for the erection of a stronghold; and certainly no place could have been better adapted, by its position and nature, for defying the attacks of an enemy from without, or for guarding any rich argosies taking shelter in the bay below. It was of course for the purpose of protecting their commerce that this rock had been seized on and fortified. It had probably also at some other period been increased and strengthened on the land side, and occupied for less laudable objects than the mere protection of commerce. Whatever might have been the original intention of its erection and its subsequent use, the massive towers and turreted walls had long since been disused, and had fallen into the decay of years, unheeded and unknown, except by a few families of fishermen who had from generation to generation followed the same occupation. I call them fishermen, because such was the designation they would have given themselves, had they been questioned on the subject, and very properly so, for that was the occupation they and their fathers had followed from time immemorial — when they happened to have no other more lucrative or interesting employment. Another change had, however, of late years come over the ancient ruins, and though it could not be said that they had assumed much of their pristine appearance, some of the least dilapidated portions, at all events, gave signs of being the habitations of human beings. One tower especially had been roofed in, as had a building attached to it, and smoke had been seen to ascend from its hearth; and faces, hitherto strangers to the island, had appeared at its windows. The village in which most of the old inhabitants of the island resided was on the opposite side of the ravine, in a spot almost as inaccessible as that on which the castle stood, but somewhat more convenient for a congregation of persons; and as it was in a manner fortified by art, in addition to what nature had done, they never found the Turks anxious to attempt the no easy task of dispossessing them. Although the exterior of the island was so rugged and unprepossessing, and so destitute of verdure and cultivation, there were spots in the interior where the orange, the citron, the pear, the apple, and the vine flourished in rich luxuriance; the sides of the hills were clothed with olive-trees, and the more even portions with fields of waving corn, amply sufficient for the simple wants of the population; and though cattle might be rare, thriving herds of goats found herbage among the rocks, and on the narrow ledges of the rugged cliffs. In fact, everything which the mere unsophisticated wants of man could require, the island itself supplied, except clothing and weapons; and for the purpose of collecting these the misticoes in the cove were found extremely useful, — no spot, indeed, could be more calculated for the abode of peace, innocence, and rural simplicity — a complete island Arcadia; and so it would possibly have become, had the inhabitants been

less addicted to maritime adventure; but then they would have had to go about in the state in which were our first parents, before the fall, or to have dressed in goats' skins; and at all events they would have had no arms to defend themselves against the Turks; so that their frequent naval expeditions might have been prompted by the excess of their patriotism, and would, therefore, to say no more about them, have been most laudable.

But the part of the island with which we are most interested is that to the east of the bay, where the ruined castle was situated. The tower which I have described as having been rendered somewhat habitable, stood in a position by which it commanded an extensive view to the southward and eastward, as also of the bay or cove below. Yet, although placed apparently in so exposed a situation, so completely surrounded was it by rocks of the same hue as the stone of which it was constructed, that at a short distance off only, on the sea, it could in no way be distinguished from them.

I must introduce the reader to an apartment in the upper part of the said tower, which possessed two windows, one looking to the south, the other into the cove.

The room presented an appearance which could not at all have been expected from the condition of the outside. It was furnished, not only completely, but most richly and luxuriously, yet in a way which showed that the hand of a professional artist had not been employed. The floor was covered with a Turkey carpet of the most valuable description, and round the room, in Oriental style, were arranged couches, with the softest cushions, and carved with thick silks of varied patterns. The walls were lined with damask hangings, of a light blue, and the ceiling was arranged in the form of a tent, composed of cottons, which had probably been fabricated in the looms of England. There were tables in the room, and seats scattered about around them.

Besides the hangings on the walls, they were ornamented with pictures of much value, and racks of arms, richly chased, and arranged so as to form many fanciful devices.

The whole appearance of the apartment showed that it had been hurriedly fitted up, with lavish disregard of expense, and with materials which might have been most conveniently at hand, but were not originally intended for the purpose to which they were devoted. The arrangements, also, were such as a seaman might be supposed to have made, more, probably, than any other person. The room had an occupant — a young and very beautiful girl. Her beauty was of the pensive cast. She had large black, gazelle eyes, a clear olive complexion — clear as purity itself, — and a figure slight and graceful, with a cast of feature of the most classic mould. As she sat at the window, gazing out on the blue sea, ever and anon a slight roseate tinge would appear in her soft cheek, and vanish rapidly as the thoughts which made it rise. Her costume was rather fanciful, than either Grecian or of any other people, and though elegant and becoming, she appeared to have formed it from a profuse supply of costly materials placed at her disposal. It partook, however, of the character of the

dress of the East, though European taste might have been detected in it.

She seemed very sad; for, though she held a book in her hand, with which she was apparently endeavouring to divert her attention from melancholy thoughts, her eyes would constantly wander over the wide blue sea, the only object visible from the window, and a pearly drop from her dark eye would steal down her cheek, and fall unheeded on the page before her, while an unconscious sigh would burst from her heaving bosom.

There was evidently a weight on her young heart, a grief which was wearing out the elasticity of her spirits, withering her glorious beauty, and making her aged before her time. Perchance she mourned the absence of one she loved, and was wearied with anxiety for his return; perhaps the canker-worm of remorse was at work within her, for a fault committed and irretrievable; perhaps she was the victim of lawless outrage, a captive against her will; perhaps she had been severed from all she loved on earth, and the bright hopes of life had been blasted for ever. At last she closed her book with a smile; but it was one of pain and bitterness at the hopelessness of her attempt to divert her mind from the contemplation of the present. A guitar, such as is generally used in Italy, lay on the divan near her; she took it up, and ran her fingers over the strings. For a few minutes she struck a plaintive air, in consonance with her feelings, and then, almost unconsciously, she added her voice to the strain in a rich flow of melody. Her words, too, were sad, and the language was that of Italy.

Nina's Song.

The earth is all as lovely here,
The sky as bright and fair,
And flowers of every hue and shade
Perfume the southern air.
The sparkling sea lies at my feet,
So clear, it seems a lake,
And tiny waves, with snowy crest,
Alone the silence break;
And yet I weep from day to day
For that loved home, now far away!

I almost wish 'twere not so like
My loved Italian land,
Its southern flowers, its gorgeous skies,
Blue sea, and golden sand.
For while I gaze, a whispering voice
Steals sadly through my brain,
And tells me, I must never hope
To see that spot again.
And I must weep, from day to day
For that loved home, now far away!

I close my eyes, and fancy paints
So vividly and clear,
Each lovely spot, each well-known sound.
To mem'ry ever dear;
I hear again the vesper-bell,
Chiming to evening prayer;
While the cheerful song of the Gondolier,
Floats through the balmy air.
And thus I dream till dawn of day,
Of that fair home, now far away!

And yet the chain which binds me hero
Is dearer far to me,
Than the beauties of my palace land,
Girt by the glorious sea.
For his dear love, I left them all,
And while that love is mine,
If dreary wastes were now my home,
Think not I would repine.
Yet still one thought, from day to day,
Tells of my home, now far away!

But if his love should ever fade,
Like twilight o'er this shore,
And whisper'd words of tenderness,
Now mine, be heard no more!
Then no reproach shall meet his ear,
No weeping meet his eye;
I'd leave him ere he form'd the wish,
And leave him but to die;
For I would seek, ere close of day,
Death, in that home now far away.

As she ceased, a tap was heard at the door; and she, bidding whoever was without to enter, a young girl appeared, and closing the door, approached her. She wore the red embroidered Greek cap, with her hair hanging in two long plaits behind, full trousers, and a silk waistcoat, reaching to the knees. Her age might have been about fourteen, and she was very pretty, with black, flashing eyes, and a figure rather full than slight, and somewhat below the common height, and a countenance to which health and spirits gave an animated expression, which would have made features far inferior to hers appear to advantage.

She seated herself on a cushion at the feet of the young lady with an affectionate familiarity, and looking up in her face, said, in the soft tongue of

modern Greece, —

"Oh, do continue those sweet strains, lady. Though they made me sad, I came up on purpose to listen to them, and to make my heart lighten the grief of yours by sharing it with you."

"Thanks, my good Mila. You are ever kind," answered the lady; and though she spoke Romaic, she had difficulty in expressing herself. "I value your love the more that I possess that of no other."

"Your sweet temper and your sweet voice have won you more friends than you suppose, lady," answered the Greek girl. "My young brother would die for you, I know, and my old grandfather, Vlacco, has his heart softened towards you, I am sure."

"Does Vlacco feel pity for me? Then would he, do you think, allow us to wander forth to explore this rocky island? I am weary of remaining shut up in so small a compass for so long a time."

"I will try and persuade him, lady; and if it is not contrary to his orders I think he will allow us to go together," returned the girl. "But you know, lady, since the futile attempt of Signor Paolo, your brother, to carry you off, you have constantly been watched."

"I know it, and therein is my misery. He knows I would not quit him if I could; and how can a weak girl escape from this rock-bound prison except — " she paused and looked at the deep blue sea which lay at their feet — "except it were to seek that rest which can be found, by one like me, only beneath the calm bosom of yonder ocean."

"Oh, lady, let not such dreadful thoughts enter into your mind!" exclaimed the young Greek, looking up at her with a face in which pity blended with alarm. "Come, we will wander forth, as you wish it, far into the country; the change of scene, the fresh air, and exercise will cheer your spirits, and I am sure my grandfather will not deny our request to be allowed a little freedom."

A silk scarf and such boots as the Turkish women wear when they venture abroad, completed the Italian lady's walking costume, and following the young Greek, they descended from her lofty tower. The flight of the steps which led to the ground was steep and narrow, and were the same which had been used in former days, repaired in places where the stones had given way, bywood work slightly run up. This, a few strokes of an axe would serve to destroy, and the summit of the tower would be immediately rendered inaccessible. The story immediately beneath the one inhabited by the lady was fitted up as a residence, though with much less attention to comfort and elegance. There were several couches for sleeping, and a few seats and tables; but in the corners of the room furthest from the windows were piled up in one, chests and bales of goods, silks, cottons, and woollen cloths; in another, a collection of arms, muskets, and cutlasses, and boarding-pikes. There were a few small brass guns, some mounted on carriages and others on swivels, such as are carried on the gunnels of ships, or on the bows of boats; and there were shot and cases which looked as if they contained powder. Indeed, there was altogether a large collection of

valuable goods, and arms and ammunition sufficient to protect, it if the men were found to use them. In the recesses for the windows, which were very narrow, were fitted platforms, which were evidently intended to place the gun-carriages on, as there were ring-bolts to which to make breechings fast, in order to prevent their running too far back at the recoil. The windows, as in the story above, looked down on the harbour, and seaward, but there was another on the land side which commanded a view of the narrow neck of land which led to the platform on which the castle stood. The lower part of the tower was much in the same state in which it had been left centuries before. The first story, as it were, had disappeared, so that there was an empty space for what may be called the height of two stories; and, as there were no windows of any description, it appeared dark and dreary in the extreme. A steep path led round it several times till it reached the gateway, which looked towards the sea and the most inaccessible part of the cliff. Any person, on entering this lower division, would not have supposed, from what he could observe, that the upper part would have afforded so great a contrast by the richness and luxury displayed there. On a more minute examination, however, of the basement floor, it would have been discovered that a stage had been raised from the earth, on which were placed a number of large jars of wine, casks of olives, cases of figs, and sacks of corn and other grain, indeed, provision sufficient to support a body of men for a considerable time. There were also some heavier guns than those seen above, and spars, and cordage, and other munitions for fitting out a ship.

The bottom of the flight of steps by which the two young girls had descended led to the side of this chamber farthest from the door, and they had some little difficulty, after leaving the bright light reigning through the upper regions, in finding their way across it. The Greek then, with her little hand, struck the door as hard as she was able, to call the attention of some one without to open it; but the noise she made was insufficient for the purpose. At last she was obliged to try the effect of her voice.

"It is I, your grandchild, Mila. Open the door, I say; open the door, Vlacco!" she exclaimed; but no one answered to her call. "So he thought I was going to remain some time with you, lady, and I verily believe he has gone off his post. Now, if we could but have managed to get the doors open, we might have gone out without his leave, and when he comes back, he would find the birds flown."

"It is useless wishing that," said the Italian. "The door is too strongly fastened, and it shows me that I am a prisoner, and no longer trusted; let us return up-stairs."

The Greek girl thought a little, as if unwilling to give up their object.

"We will do as you propose, lady," she said at last; "but we will not let him know that we came down, and are aware that he leaves his post; so, another day he may not fasten the gate, and we may get out, and wander where we like, without asking his leave."

They were about returning, when little Mila exclaimed, —

"Stay, I think I hear him coming, and we won't tell him we have been

waiting; but, after he has been here a little, I will ask to be let out."

They waited accordingly for some time, during which some person was heard moving slowly about outside, when little Mila again exclaimed, as loud as she could call, "Vlacco, Vlacco! let me out, I say, grandfather; you have bolted the door, as if a storm was blowing to burst it open."

At last the bolt was withdrawn, and the door opening, an old Greek, with white locks escaping from under his red cap, and a thick, grey moustache, stood before them. He had a rough, weatherbeaten countenance, and dark eyes, deeply sunk in his head, with a very stern expression. His appearance was altogether forbidding, and his countenance was one which it would make any person very uncomfortable to look at, who knew that his life depended on the amount of mercy and pity to be found in his bosom. He must have been a powerful, active man in his youth; but a weight of years had sadly pulled down his strength, and palsied his once unfaltering hand.

"What a noise you make, little one. You seem to be in a great hurry to get out of the gilded cage," he exclaimed, not seeing the Italian who stood in the shade. When, however, she stepped forward, he altered his tone, which became as courteous as his gruff nature would allow. "Pardon, lady," he said, "I was not aware of your presence. What is it you wish?"

"Why, we wish to wander forth, and explore the island, grandfather," answered the young girl, speaking for the Italian, who had difficulty both in comprehending old Vlacco's way of speaking, and in answering him in Romaic. "Now, I will not hear any excuses; I am going with the lady, who is ill, and will pine to death if she is kept shut up in this way; and, if you do not think we are able to take care of ourselves, you can come too. It is a pity we have not got wings, and then you might clip them as they do those of the wild sea-fowl, to prevent their flying away."

The old Greek offered a number of objections to the project; among others, that if anything happened to the lady, his life would pay the forfeit; but they were all overruled by his grandchild, who laughed at his fears, and at length she and the Italian set out on their expedition. They took the way along the neck of land of which I have spoken, among rocks which towered up in many fantastic shapes, without a sign of vegetation on their weatherworn summits, and overlooking precipices which descended many hundred feet of perpendicular height into the sea below. At last they emerged from this wilder tract, and descending a gentle slope covered with many a sweet-scented shrub, on which the bees delight to rest, they looked down into the centre of the island. Here a scene of a nature totally different to what they had left met their view. Every spot of ground was cultivated to the utmost extent. Below their feet was an orange grove, the trees of which were laden with the ripening fruit; the side of a neighbouring hill was covered with vines wide spreading along trellises gracefully arranged. Several orchards of apple and pear trees were seen in the distance. Beyond were fields of Indian corn waving in the breeze, and on the higher ground millet and barley were seen growing.

“We may boast, lady, that our island is not altogether the barren rock those might suppose who have looked forth only from the windows of the castle,” said Mila. “And from yonder hill to the north let us enjoy the view over the whole of it, if you will venture so far.”

The Italian expressed her readiness to go there; for though, as she said, she had before visited it, a long time since then had passed away.

As the two young girls passed through the fields, several husbandmen, employed in them, gazed at them with a somewhat furious look; but they all knew the granddaughter of old Vlacco, and quickly concluded who her companion was. The view from the summit of the hill, which was the highest part of the island, extended, as Mila had said, not only over the whole of the island, but embraced a wide circle of the surrounding sea, and of many a neighbouring isle and islet, which appeared in every direction, rising from the bosom of the deep, some with their outlines clear and defined, others of various shades of blue, the most distant seeming like faint clouds floating in the horizon. They had enjoyed for some time, from this rocky post, the breeze which in that elevated position came cool and refreshing, when the quick eye of little Mila discerned a white sail, a mere speck, upon the blue sea. It skimmed rapidly along, and approached the island. They watched the vessel with breathless attention.

“She has two masts; she is a brig of some size,” cried the island girl, who was well accustomed to distinguish the different rigs of vessels.

“It is, it must be his bark,” exclaimed the Italian. “Oh! let us hurry to meet him, or he may come and find me absent.”

“The brig cannot arrive till long after we shall reach the tower,” answered the Greek girl, following, however, the wishes of her companion.

On reaching the tower they saw the shores of the bay below crowded with people, all bustle and animation, in expectation of the approaching sail; but neither of the girls could determine, from the great distance at which she still was, whether she were indeed the looked-for brig or a stranger.

Chapter Seventeen.

A bright moon was floating in the pure ether of that lovely clime, as the Ione, under all sail, glided out from the calm waters of the harbour of Valetta on to the open sea. No sooner had she got beyond the shelter of Saint Elmo than she heeled over to the force of a brisk north-westerly breeze, which sent her through the water at the rate of some seven or eight knots an hour, to the no small satisfaction of all on board. No time had been lost in getting ready for sea. The purser had got off his stores with unusual despatch; the first lieutenant had received what he required from the dockyard; the officers, who were on shore, had been sent for and collected; sea stock had been laid in by the caterers of the gun-room and midshipmen's mess, and Signor Michael, from Nix Mangiare Stairs, had not neglected to send the groceries which were ordered; little was forgotten, and no one was left behind. The commander had been the most busy, and those who saw the calm and composed way in which he went about the business in which he was occupied, could scarcely have supposed the anguish which had so lately rent his mind. After he had spoken to his first lieutenant, he had again gone on shore, and tried to find out the three Greeks who had deposed to having been robbed by pirates; but as they had quitted Malta, he looked over the copies of their depositions, and he there found it stated that the vessel which had attacked theirs was a large polacca brig, supposed to be the Sea Hawk, and there was further a full description of her and her commander. The boatman, Manuel, was examined, but little could be gleaned from him but a description of the person he had put on board the speronara, which answered to that given by the Greeks; and the conclusion arrived at was the correct one, that he was no other than Zappa himself, and that he had employed the speronara merely to bring him to Malta and to carry him on board his own vessel, which must have remained all the time in the offing. It might be supposed that Captain Fleetwood would first have gone in search of the speronara, but he considered that by so doing he should lose much valuable time without a prospect of gaining any adequate information; and he therefore resolved at once to sail to the eastward, touching at Cephalonia, on the chance of learning something to guide his future course.

The moment the object of the voyage was known, there was not a man or boy on board who did not zealously enter into it; and many became almost as eager to fall in with the Sea Hawk, and to recover the prisoners, if any were still alive, as could have been the commander himself. It was the universal subject of conversation, morning, noon, and night, in the gun-room, the midshipmen's berth, and at the messes of the petty officers and men. Many a midnight watch was made to pass rapidly away by discussions as to the probabilities of their success, and with yarns of length interminable, about pirates and robberies on the high seas. Far too sacred were held the feelings of the commander to allow

any one to allude even to the subject to him; and though he doubtlessly thought more than any one else about it, he endeavoured to maintain his usual tranquil exterior. It was sad, however, to perceive that anxiety was rapidly thinning his cheek and dimming the lustre of his eye, though it could not quench the fire which would urge him to continue the search as long as life endured. He remained much in his cabin, poring over charts of the Greek Archipelago, and studying all the books he possessed, describing the islands. When he came on deck, it was to glean information from those who had visited that part of the Mediterranean, or to discuss with Saltwell the plan of operations he had commenced arranging, but in the details of which he purposed to be guided by the accounts he should receive wherever they touched.

Every sail they sighted was overhauled, provided she did not lead them much out of their course, in the hopes of gaining tidings either of the survivors of the Zodiac's crew or of the pirate brig, and also to urge those bound in the same direction to aid in the search.

Every one on board the Ione prayed for a fair wind, and plenty of it, to carry them along rapidly to the scene of their operations. The officers, who could but sympathise with their captain from having known Ada Garden, were, of course, the most eager, and never, perhaps, were a set of men collected better able to aid in accomplishing the same object.

Mr Saltwell, the first lieutenant, was a first-rate officer. He had been constantly before at sea as a first lieutenant; for though his good qualities were known in the service, he had very little interest. Whatever was the work in hand, he contrived to get it done in the best possible way without noise or trouble, so that he was always liked by the men, and the ships in which he served were kept in excellent order. In appearance he was slight and dark, for his countenance was well bronzed by tropical suns, and he was too active to grow fat. His manners were gentlemanly, though he had a remarkably small amount of soft-sawder about him; and all sincerity himself, he could not believe that people were speaking falsely to him, and was at times rather apt to come out roundly with the truth, to the astonishment of those who heard him; so that he was clearly not fitted to be a courtier. Captain Fleetwood had a great respect and regard for him, as he knew him well, for they had before served together.

The second lieutenant, Henry Linton, was a young man of good family and considerable interest, he had been made a lieutenant as soon as he had served his time, and he expected shortly to receive his commander's commission. He was a very gentlemanly, amiable fellow; and as he had good sense and much observation, and had always attended to his duty, he was a very fair seaman and a good officer. In his heart of hearts he rather pitied, not to say despised, Saltwell, for his want of the polish he possessed and his indifference to the elegancies of life, though he was not unable to appreciate his messmate's frankness of manner and truthfulness of character. His foible was his

admiration for the poets, and his belief that he could write poetry and was a first-rate critic.

The purser, Mr Jones, was an honest, painstaking man, with a large family, and he came to sea for their benefit, after having nearly given up the service.

Than the master, no one in the service was a better navigator. He was a self-taught genius, for he had gone to sea originally before the mast, and even in that capacity had found time to gain instructions in navigation, geography, history, and many other sciences. He was for some time rated as a schoolmaster of a frigate, and afterwards entered as a master's assistant, and was soon promoted to the rank of master. Mr Norton was, notwithstanding his early associates, a man of pleasing, gentlemanly manners, and a real favourite with all hands, and his vast fund of information and anecdote made him a great acquisition to a mess.

The surgeon, Mr Viall, was, for a wonder, an Englishman. He was supposed to be able to amputate limbs with great accuracy, and was a very respectable man. Though he had been some years at sea, he had never contrived to learn anything about nautical affairs; and one day, in Malta harbour, he went on board a large merchantman, which happened to be brought up at no great distance from his ship, and was going below before he discovered that he had got into the wrong box.

The assistant-surgeon, O'Farrall, was an Irishman, and much more of a character. He had, shortly before the time of which I speak, come to sea for the first time. A day or two after he had joined the Ione, one of the marines insulted him by quizzing his Irish brogue, so he forthwith lodged his complaint with Mr Saltwell. The first lieutenant desired him to point out the man.

"Faith, I don't remember exactly the cut of his mug," said he; "but I made sure of knowing the spalpeen again by that same, that his name is Tower."

"How do you know that his name is Tower? I think he must have deceived you. We havn't a man of that name on board."

"Oh! by — , he couldn't decave me, lieutenant, darlin', then; for though he didn't recollect it, I'll be sworn, or he'd a kept a more dacent tongue in his mouth, I saw his name of Tower graven on his musket."

Most of the other members of the midshipmen's berth I have already described.

There was a mate of the name of Grummit, who had been for some years waiting for his promotion, but was of so hopeful a disposition, that he always expected his commission out by the following packet; and there was a master's assistant, called Samuel Spike, who considered himself capable of commanding the allied fleets of Europe; and a clerk, named Smith, who intended, when he had made his fortune and retired from the Service, to become First Lord of the Treasury; but as these delusions did not prevent them from attending to their duties, and they certainly appeared to contribute very much to the happiness of the young men who entertained them, nobody interfered with them. I ought not to forget to mention among the officers, the boatswain, gunner, and

carpenter. The most remarkable circumstance connected with them was, that their names were respectively Brown, Black, and White. They were all good seamen, and properly impressed with the importance of their offices. If Brown had, like his superiors, a weakness, it was in the belief that not a boatswain in the service could pipe better, or had a louder voice than himself, as also that he deserved a much higher rating than he possessed.

"A sail on the larboard bow," hailed the look-out from the mast-head.

"What does she look like?" inquired Mr Saltwell, who was on deck.

"A large brig, sir, close hauled on the larboard tack," was the answer.

The wind at the time was about north-west.

The first lieutenant, with his glass slung across his shoulder, instantly went aloft. He could see about half way down her topsails, and there was something in the look of them which made him think it was worth while overhauling her. He came down, and went into the cabin to report her to Captain Fleetwood.

On his return the yards were braced up a little, and the course altered three points more to the northward. Captain Fleetwood soon came on deck, and went aloft to examine the chase. As the Ione was already carrying as much canvas as could possibly be set, little more could be done to make her sail faster.

Of course, bound as they were on what might prove a long and arduous cruise, it would not have done to start the water, or lighten the ship in any way; and, in a smooth sea, the common expedient of slinging the hammocks, and making the watch below turn in with round shot in their arms, would have been of no avail. The breeze, however, favoured them; for while the Ione was heeling over with it almost to her bearings, the chase lay nearly becalmed. She had no royals set, and her foresail was hauled up, so that they neared her rapidly.

"I suspect our friend there keeps a bad look-out; for I don't think he has seen us yet," observed Mr Saltwell to the master.

"If that is the case, he is not the fellow we are in search of," answered Mr Norton. "A pirate would have his eyes about him."

"Perhaps, as he is becalmed and cannot get away, he hopes, by apparent indifference to our approach, to deceive us as to his character," suggested Linton; "or he may have mistaken us for a merchantman, and expects to make a prize of us."

"He'll find he's caught a Tartar," said Saltwell; "but he must be blind not to see by the cut of our canvas what we are, even at this distance."

"Perhaps, he trusts to a fleet pair of heels, and we shall have him showing them to us before long," said Linton. "I do not think there is anything yet to prove that he is not the pirate we are looking for. That fellow Zappa is a bold and crafty scoundrel, as his late visit to Malta and his successful attack on the Austrian brig sufficiently proves. He may have a mind to engage us, perhaps."

"You don't know the Greeks, if you think so," said Saltwell. "Why, you must have pictured him to yourself like one of the heroes in the romances you are so fond of, who fight alone for love and glory, and whose greatest delight is to lay their ships alongside an enemy of greater force, in order to prove how superior

knaves are to honest men. Depend upon it, Signor Zappa will keep clear of us, if he can."

"Well, but what do you say to his attacking an Austrian man-of-war, and capturing her?" urged Linton. "That looks something like the chivalry of piracy."

"As to that, in the first place, he discovered, by some means or other, that she had specie on board; and she was also of much less force than his vessel. He carries, it is said, sixteen guns, and she had but eight," answered Saltwell. "So he followed her for some time, till he surprised her one dark night, and captured her before her crew had time to go to quarters. It did not say much for Austrian naval discipline, though it was not an enterprise Zappa had any great reason to boast of, either."

"If the account I heard is true, he acted, however, the part of a magnanimous conqueror; for, after he had rifled the brig, and taken everything he wanted out of her, he allowed her and her officers and crew to go free, without murdering a soul of them, which, at all events, speaks in his favour," said Linton.

"Well, if that is his vessel, we shall soon know more about him and her," observed Saltwell. "We are nearing her fast. I shall go aloft, and try if I can make out what her hull is like."

They drew nearer and nearer the stranger, who still continued her course to the northward under the same easy sail.

At last, her hull was visible from the deck.

Mr Saltwell had his glass fixed on her, as had Captain Fleetwood.

"What do you make her out to be, Mr Saltwell?" said the captain.

"She is polacca rigged, with raking masts, and has a long, low, dark hull," answered the first lieutenant.

"The very description of the Sea Hawk," exclaimed Linton. "I hope to goodness it may be her."

"I trust it may," said Captain Fleetwood, drawing in his breath, and compressing his lips, to conceal his agitation.

The excitement on board now increased, as there appeared a greater probability of the stranger proving to be the pirate.

Anxiously beat the heart of Captain Fleetwood. What might be the consequence, supposing the prisoners were on board, and his Ada among them? Would the pirate hold them as hostages? Zappa, he was aware, well knew, from what he had learned at the ball at Malta, how dear Ada Garden was to him, and what, in consequence, might be the pirate's conduct?

His orders were to burn, sink, or destroy the rover, wherever he should find him; and he resolved to do his duty.

As he walked the deck in silence, he glanced his eye aloft more frequently than usual to see how the sails stood. They were never better set. Every brace and bowline was taut to a nicety. Then he would look over the bulwarks to judge of the rate at which they were slipping through the water, by the appearance of

the sparkling bubbles, as they darted off from the side, and circled in eddies under the counter, and many an earnest gaze did he cast at the chase to assure himself that he was still coming up with her. It is a saying, that when a hare runs, the dogs will follow — it is equally true at sea, even when the order is reversed, if a vessel makes sail in chase, the chase will generally run away. Hitherto the officers of the Ione had found the vessel in sight offering an exception to the rule.

"Let her see our colours, Mr Saltwell. It may induce her to show hers in return."

The British ensign flew out to the breeze at the peak of the Ione; but, for some time, no attention was paid to it by the stranger — perhaps, it might not have been observed — at all events, no answer was made.

"Ah, the rascal is ashamed of his nation, or is puzzled to know what bunting to show us," said the master. "No, by Jove; there flies the new flag of independence, and a pennant to boot. He wishes to make us suppose he is a Greek man-of-war."

"He may try to do so, but he will not deceive us," said Linton. "There's a most piratical cut about the fellow, which is enough to condemn him anywhere."

"We shall soon get her within range of our long guns, and we shall then see what she is made of," observed Saltwell, eyeing her. "Shall we get the gun ready, sir?" he asked of Captain Fleetwood.

"You may, Mr Saltwell; but as long as she does not show any intention of avoiding us, on no account fire," was the answer.

"He seems in no hurry to move, at all events," observed the first lieutenant. He had scarcely spoken, however, before the breeze which the Ione had brought up with her reached the stranger, and, as if to make amends for her former inactivity, the heavy folds of the foresail were let fall, the royals were sent aloft, her head fell off from the wind, studdensail after studdensail was set, and away she flew, before the freshening breeze, like a sea-fowl darting from its slumber on the wave, at a rate which those on board the British ship felt it would take their utmost speed to compete with.

"Up with the helm — square away the yards, Mr Saltwell," exclaimed Captain Fleetwood, as soon as he saw what she was about to do.

"Ay, ay, sir. All hands make sail," cried Saltwell.

"All hands make sail," was echoed along the decks.

The men sprang on deck. The order to set the studden-sails was given. The hands flew aloft, and before the Greek had got all his canvas up, the Ione had every stitch she could carry packed on her. This gave her an advantage, but the stranger was still far beyond the range of her long guns.

A stern chase is so proverbially a long chase, especially when the leading vessel happens to be the fastest, as there soon appeared reason to believe was the case in the present instance, that I will not weary the reader by describing it, but, for the present, will leave His Majesty's ship Ione running under all sail,

in chase of a suspicious craft, towards the island-studded shores of Greece.

Chapter Eighteen.

Never did the Ione go along at greater speed under the same canvas than she was doing in chase of the Greek brig; but fast as she went, she gained little, if anything, on the vessel she pursued. No two crafts could have been better matched. The chances were all, therefore, in favour of the escape of the latter. She was four miles ahead, and she kept that distance. She might carry away a mast or spar, and thus the Ione might come up with her; or it might fall calm, and she might be overhauled by the boats, but the pursuer was just as likely to receive some damage, and thus she had most to fear a calm. If she could manage to hold her own till night came on, she would be able to haul her wind on either tack with very little danger of being discovered. The officers walked the deck with impatient steps. It was provoking to have a vessel just ahead of them, and which they all felt almost sure was the one they were in search of, and yet be unable to come up with her.

"If we could but get her within range of our guns, there would be some satisfaction in peppering at her," said Jemmy Duff, who, with several of his messmates had gone on the forecastle to have a better view of the chase. "I'd give a month's pay to have only one slap at her."

"That's not any overwhelming sum, Jemmy, though," observed Togle, laughing. "I'd give the whole of my half-pay for a year, and all the fortune you're ever likely to leave me, to have her within range of our guns for ten minutes."

"Mighty generous you are, indeed," said Jack Raby. "By that way of reckoning, whoever got the half-pay would be sadly out of pocket, as a midshipman's half-pay is nothing, and find himself; if he accepted the one, he would have to pay for your grub, and whoever gets Jemmy's fortune won't have much duty to pay, I'll bet."

"No; I must consider my rank in the service my fortune, whenever I have to propose to a young lady," answered Duff, putting his hand on his heart, with a sentimental look. "But, I say, can't we do something to get hold of that fellow ahead of us?"

"Why, I suppose he'll fetch the land one of these days, and then, if he can't sail over it, like the Yankee flat-bottomed crafts, which draw so little water that they can go across the country, when the dew is on the grass in the morning, we shall come up with him," replied Togle, with great gravity.

"I wonder you can joke about it, Togle," said Duff. "For my part, I hate the sort of work, it makes one feel all nohow, and sadly injures the appetite; I could scarcely eat my dinner to-day."

"One wouldn't have supposed so by the manner you stowed away the grub," answered Togle. "For my part, I don't feel so anxious, because I've made up my mind that we shall catch her some time or other. Let's see, it has just gone

seven bells, so we've more than three hours of day-light, and much may happen in that time."

The men were, meantime, discussing the subject of the chase in their own fashion; nor did the three warrant officers, Brown, Black, and White, fail to express their opinions on the matter.

"My opinion is," said Mr Brown, "that them Grecian chaps know how to build crafts suited for going along in their own waters, as all must allow is the case in most parts; but just let us catch any one of them — that fellow ahead, for example — outside the straits, wouldn't we just come alongside him in a quarter less time."

"As it is, he'll lead us a pretty chase, I fear," observed Mr Black. "It will be like one I heard of in the war time, when a Jersey privateer chased a French schooner from off the Start right round the Cape, and never caught her till she ran into the Hoorly."

"Ah! but there was a longer chase than that which I have heard talk of, when the Mary Dunn, of Dover, during the Dutch war, followed a Dutchman right round the world, and never caught her at all," said Mr White, who piqued himself on being facetious. "Now, I'm thinking this present affair will be, somehow, like that, unless as how we manage to go faster than we now goes along, which ain't very likely, or she goes slower, which she don't seem to have a mind to do."

During the day, Captain Fleetwood scarcely quitted the deck. Up and down he paced, with his glass under his arm, now and then stopping and taking an anxious look at the chase, again to continue his walk, or else he would stand loaning against the bulwarks for a length of time together, without moving, unconscious of its lapse; his thoughts evidently fixed on the vessel ahead, and penetrating, in fancy, her interior. Indeed, none of the officers remained below longer than was necessary to take their meals, and every glass was in requisition to watch the chase.

Towards the evening, the wind, although keeping steady in the same quarter, gave indications of falling light, and there seemed every probability of what most on board had prognosticated would not take place — a calm.

"The wind has dropped very much, sir," said Mr Saltwell to the captain.

"It has," replied Captain Fleetwood. "I know what you would say — Get the boats ready for hoisting out. We'll overhaul her in them, if it falls calm, as I trust it will. As yet, she goes faster ahead than we should pull. I will go with them, and you, Saltwell, must take charge of the ship."

The first lieutenant signified his comprehension of his commander's orders, and immediately set about carrying them into execution.

The prospect of a calm was seen by all on board, and the news that the chase was to be attacked with the boats, should such happen, gave the greatest satisfaction, every one being anxious to go in them. Notwithstanding the dangers and hardships of boat service, it is one Jack likes excessively, on account of its excitement and variety. The commander intended to lead in the

first gig. Linton was to command the cutter, and Tompion, one of the mates, the second gig, which were the only boats to be employed.

The arrangements had scarcely been concluded, when a loud flap of the canvas against the masts gave indication of the cessation of the breeze. Still, however, the brig had considerable way through the water. Linton was looking through his glass at the vessel ahead.

"She still seems to have the breeze," he observed to Saltwell. "I hope the fellow is not going to carry it off with him."

"I suspect he'll soon find it leave him," replied Saltwell. "But I wish it would be quick about it, for otherwise it will be getting dark before we get alongside."

"As long as we can make out the enemy, that will not much signify," replied Linton. "There will be less chance of our being hit."

"Yes; but remember, in boarding in the dark, you are fighting on the enemy's ground," observed Saltwell. "He knows his position and resources, and has you at a disadvantage. Give me daylight, and let me see my enemy's face."

"Ah! there seems a prospect of our having it, for the sails begin to flap heavily, and, by Jove, the chase is no better off," exclaimed Linton. "See, he has got the wind already up and down his mast."

"Huzza!" cried Jemmy Duff, who was midshipman of the cutter. "There's farewell to the wind for Mr Grego."

"Lower the boats, Mr Saltwell," was heard in the deep tones of the captain's voice.

The first lieutenant repeated the order. Mr Brown's whistle was next heard piping the boats away, and getting out the cutter, and in another minute the crews and the respective officers were in them, waiting for the commander to shove off. He had gone below for an instant for his sword, and when he stepped into his boat, though he looked pale, there was resolution in his eye to dare the worst, and if needs be to suffer the worst. With a hearty cheer from their shipmates, the boats shoved off, and pulled with lusty strokes towards the stranger. They had no positive right as yet to consider her an enemy, except from the fact of her having led them a somewhat longish chase; but as it was not much out of their course, they had no reason to complain. The Ione still kept under sail, slowly drawing ahead.

The stranger appeared to be no way disconcerted at their approach, but as she was almost entirely becalmed, she hauled up her foresail to get it out of the way, and seemed quietly to be waiting for them.

"Can you make out what those fellows are about, sir?" asked Jemmy Duff of his superior. "They don't seem to be afraid of us."

"Just stand up in the bows, and try what you can do to arouse their fears, Duff," said Linton, laughing. "We must have sharp eyes to know how they look at this distance, and perhaps as they know that they cannot get away from us, they think it better to put a bold face on the matter."

The sun was just about to sink in the waves as the boats came within range of the stranger's guns, but she allowed them to pull on without molestation,

and as they got still nearer, they saw that she had no boarding nettings triced up, though, through the open ports, the crew were seen at their quarters, and the guns were run out ready for action. She appeared to be crowded with men in the Greek costume. They had but little time for observing anything before they were close to her.

"What do those boats want here?" hailed the voice of some one standing on her poop.

"These are the boats of His Britannic Majesty's brig, Ione," answered Captain Fleetwood, standing up in the stern sheets of his gig. "What brig is that?"

Linton every instant expected a shower of grape as the answer of the stranger.

There was a pause.

"The Independent Greek Government's brig, Ypsilante," was at length the answer. "What is your object in visiting us?"

"I am in search of a pirate who has attacked an English ship," replied Captain Fleetwood; "I wish to gain some information about her."

"I shall be glad to see you on board, then," said the same person.

And he was heard to issue several orders in his own language.

"Keep under her stern in case of treachery," said the captain to Linton and Tompion. "I will go on board — I still have my doubts about her character."

In another minute the gallant Fleetwood was ascending the side of the Greek brig, alone. Side ropes were handed to him, and the side was manned in man-of-war fashion, and he found a group of officers assembled at the gangway to receive him. The captain, a fine-looking man, was distinguishable by the richness of his dress and his dignified bearing. He received his visitor very courteously.

"I have led you a long chase, I am afraid," he observed, speaking English, "but the reason I did so you will allow was a good one, for I was myself chasing another vessel all the time, and of course could not heave to, that I might inform you, nor had I the means of signalising you to that effect."

"What do you believe to be the vessel you were chasing?" inquired Fleetwood, anxiously.

"A Greek, I am sorry to say, and a sister vessel of this brig. She has lately plundered a vessel laden with arms, and as they are much required by the patriots, I was dispatched to try and fall in with her."

"What is her name, or rather who commands her?" asked Fleetwood.

"Her name is the Sea Hawk, and she is commanded by the noted pirate, Zappa," replied the Greek captain.

"The very vessel I am in search of," said Fleetwood. "But is it not more likely that he should have gone somewhere to dispose of his booty than that he should remain cruising about here?"

"He has had time to deposit his booty, and to return to look for more," replied the Greek. "If we could get hold of him, we should make him disgorge

all he possesses as a ransom for himself and followers."

"What, and let him loose again on the world to commit further piracies?" exclaimed Fleetwood.

The Greek captain laughed, as he replied: — "Why, it would not do to hang men limply for being guilty of a little piracy. Some of our leading chiefs might object to the precedent. But I will gladly aid you in looking for Signor Zappa; and if you catch him, of course you will be at liberty to treat him as you think fit. To be frank with you, I do not think you will find him unprepared in his strong-hold, and he will not yield up his vessel without many hard blows."

"What! are you acquainted with the situation of his stronghold?" exclaimed Fleetwood, eagerly.

"Well!" answered the Greek captain. "And if you will step into my cabin, I will point it out to you on the chart."

By this time the sun had gone down, and the gloom of the evening prevented the countenances of those surrounding him from being distinguishable, adding somewhat to the wildness of their appearance and the fierceness of their moustachioed countenances. As he stood on the poop he looked over the taffrail, where he could see the two boats keeping off just within hail, and in the distance the lights hoisted at the mast-head of his own ship to guide him on his return.

It must not be supposed that Fleetwood had not all this time his misgivings as to the character of the vessel he was on board. She might be the famed Sea Hawk, Zappa's own brig, and the man he was speaking to, one of the pirate's lieutenants; for he suspected that Zappa would not venture to present himself in person for fear of being recognised. Notwithstanding this, with an unfaltering step he followed the officer into the cabin.

The cabin was small, and fitted up in a way suitable to that of a vessel engaged in an arduous and dangerous service — a couple of sofas, a table, and chairs, were the chief articles of furniture, with some shelves, a buffet, and a stand for arms.

"I can but offer you rough entertainment," said the Greek, courteously placing a seat for his guest. "We are so engaged in hunting down those scoundrel Turks that we have little time to think of luxuries — such as I have, I shall place before you." As he spoke, he clapped his hands in oriental fashion, and a servant appeared. "Bring wine and bread, and such food as you have," he said, and the man vanished.

Fleetwood would have declined the proffered hospitality, on the plea of being anxious to return to his ship; but his host insisted on having the refreshment brought in, observing, — "It is the custom in the East, remember, to eat salt together as a sign of amity, so you cannot refuse me."

As he spoke, the servant returned, bringing in the very frugal fare he had ordered — a jar of wine, some olives, and bread of rather brownish hue, with some goats' milk cheese, were placed on the table.

"It is not the sort of fare you would give me on board your ship; but, such as

it is, I offer it to you," said the Greek captain.

"It is more than I expected," answered Fleetwood, bowing. "But may I ask, have you been on board any British ship of war?"

"I have served on board on the L — — as a midshipman, and have since, on several occasions, acted as pilot and interpreter. You see in me, Captain Fleetwood, one who is solicitous to be of use to you; and, as you appear to be anxious to meet this Signor Zappa, I will now show you where you are most likely to fall in with him."

The evident frankness and cordiality of these expressions at once dissipated all Fleetwood's previous misgivings, and in a few words, while he was partaking of the refreshment placed before him, he detailed what had occurred, and his belief that the pirate had made prisoner of an English lady, even if he had not murdered the rest of those on board.

While he was speaking, the Greek brought down a chart of the Archipelago, and pointed out the island of Lissa, a minute description of which he gave.

"But, Captain Fleetwood," he observed, "with your brig, or indeed with the whole British navy at command, you can scarcely capture that island, especially while the pirate holds hostages so dear to you in his hands. Take my advice, attempt nothing by force; your only chance of success is by stratagem. By following a plan I will venture to suggest to you, if you will undergo the danger, which I will not deny is very great, I think there is a prospect of your being able to rescue your friends. Once, however, arouse the suspicions of the pirate and his followers, they will put the place in so strong a state of defence, and will keep so vigilant a watch over their prisoners, that an attack on the island will be useless. Remember, when I tell you this, I am well acquainted with the place and the people, and I feel assured of the soundness of my advice."

Captain Fleetwood thanked him very much, and assured him that he was eager to hear the plan he would advise him to follow.

On this, Captain Teodoro Vassilato, for such was the name of his new Greek friend, explained it to him, and promised him his assistance in carrying it out. What it was it is not necessary here to detail, as it will be fully developed in a future part of this story.

Linton sat in the boat keeping way with the Greek brig, which still glided slowly ahead, till he began to lose his patience, and at last he grew alarmed at the non-arrival of his commander. Could any treachery have been practised? he thought, and had Fleetwood's generous boldness led to his destruction? He longed to penetrate the intention of that dark mass ahead of him, which lay rolling uneasily, as the glassy swell at long intervals heaved noiselessly under her keel, as it glided onwards. He remembered, too, all the suspicions which had been entertained of the craft, and he longed to pull alongside, and to demand what had become of his captain. But he had been directed to remain where he was till his return, and he was too good a disciplinarian not to obey orders. The gig, he believed, was still alongside, with the people in her, but it was so dark, it was difficult to make that out. He had almost resolved to send

Tompion in the second gig to ascertain this, when he heard the splash of oars in the water, and his doubts were soon after relieved by the return of Captain Fleetwood.

"I have kept you some time, gentlemen," said the captain. "But I have gained some important information to guide our proceedings. Now give way and follow me."

The boats were soon on board, and hoisted in, and during the night a breeze from the northward springing up, the Ione continued her voyage to Cephalonia, which it was expected she would make during the course of the day. The forenoon watch had just been set, and the officers were going to breakfast, when the look-out at the mast-head, who had just gone aloft, hailed the deck to say that there was an object on the lee bow, floating deep in the water, but he could not distinguish what it was.

"What does it look like, though?" asked the first lieutenant.

"It's more like a boat bottom up, or a thick piece of timber, than anything else," was the answer; "but I think it's a boat, sir."

"It's not worth while going out of our course to ascertain," observed Linton.

"I am not so certain of that," exclaimed Saltwell. "It may be part of the wreck of the Zodiac. At all events, I shall inform the captain."

He accordingly went into the cabin, and on his return the ship was kept away, and Captain Fleetwood came on deck.

"Aloft there, can you see it now?" hailed Mr Saltwell.

"Yes, sir, we're steering right for it, and I make no doubt it's a boat."

The brig was making good way through the water, and soon approached the object, which proved to be a boat with her keel up. She was then hove-to, a boat was lowered to tow the swamped boat alongside. When this was done, a rope was passed under her stern, she was lifted till the tackle fall could be hooked on to the ring-bolt in it, when she was easily turned over, and as she was hoisted up the water was baled out. Every one was eager to learn what boat she was.

It was soon perceived that she had been much shattered and damaged, for the gunnel on one side had been almost knocked away, and the bows had been stove in; but the injury had been repaired by one or more coats of tarred canvas, nailed over her bow and bottom, in a very rough way. The captain at once pronounced her to be an English-built boat, but she had no name by which it could be discovered to what vessel she belonged.

"Some poor fellows have been cast away on the rocks, and tried to make their escape in her," remarked Linton. "They must have encountered another squall in that ricketty craft, and she must have capsized and drowned them all."

"It looks too like it," said Saltwell. "But if they had got on any rocks they would have taken a longer time to put her to rights. What think you of her being launched from the deck of a sinking vessel?"

"The same idea struck me," observed Mr Norton, the master. "I suspect, if we had the means of ascertaining, that she will be found to be one of the boats of the lost Zodiac."

“I fear it; and if so, all must have perished,” said Saltwell. “It would be cruel to suggest it to the captain.”

“He already has thought of that,” observed the master.

“What shall we do with the boat, sir?” inquired the first lieutenant of the captain. “Shall we cast her adrift?”

“No — get her in on deck, and overhaul her more thoroughly,” was the answer.

This was done; and while the carpenter was examining her, and making remarks on the curious way she had been patched up, he found, in the stern sheets, a silk handkerchief, which had been thrust into a hole, over which, evidently, there had not been time to nail any canvas. It had thus been fixed in so tightly, that the water had not been able to wash it out.

The carpenter drew it forth, and opened it.

“Ah, here is a name in a corner, which will go far to prove to whom the boat belonged,” he exclaimed. “If I know how to read, these letters on it spell — ‘J. Bowse.’ What do you say, Brown?”

“There’s no doubt about it,” answered the boatswain, shaking his head. “And by the same token, it belonged to the master of the Zodiac, for he used to be very proud of having his handkerchief marked in that way, as it was Mistress Bowse’s own handy work; and, t’other day, when he was aboard of us, he, poor fellow, showed me that very handkerchief, and said his missis had worked him another set just afore he came away.”

The discovery was reported to the captain; but he made no remark on it. He, apparently, had before come to the conclusion, that the boat had belonged to the unfortunate Zodiac.

“Land ahead,” was cried out from aloft, and resounded through the ship; and before the middle of the afternoon-watch, the lofty mountains of Cephalonia rose in view, with the lower lands of Zante to the southward.

The wind freshened, and backing round more to the westward, the Ione stood boldly in for the entrance of the magnificent harbour of Argostoli, and, before nightfall, anchored within a mile of the town.

Captain Fleetwood immediately hurried on shore. With a heart beating with anxiety, he made inquiries about the Zodiac; but nothing had been heard of her, or her passengers and crew. He did not yet despair, and taking an interpreter with him, who was strongly recommended, he returned on board, the anchor was got up, and the Ione stood out of the harbour of Argostoli.

There was little chance of the grass growing under her keel.

Chapter Nineteen.

On reaching the ruins, the Lady Nina and her companion saw old Vlacco seated on a rock, at a short distance, whence he could command an extensive view of the sea. He had a spyglass in his hand, which he every now and then lifted to his eye, to observe the approaching sail, and then he would let it fall again into his lap, as if he were considering what she was.

"Let us go and ask my grandfather what he thinks is the vessel in sight," said Mila, and, with some difficulty, they worked their way over the rocks and ruins towards him.

He turned round rather gruffly at hearing the voice of his grandchild, as she asked him what he thought was the sail nearing the island; for, as he himself had not yet made up his mind on the subject, he was unable to give her a positive answer; and was very unwilling to confess his ignorance, especially in the presence of the Lady Nina.

"She is a brig, child; and I should have thought your own sharp eyes would have told you that," he answered.

"So they have, grandfather," she replied. "I have seen that she is a brig long ago; but I want to know whether she is the Sea Hawk, or a stranger."

"A stranger would scarcely be running directly for the port, as that vessel is; and it is about the time we may expect our chief's return," answered old Vlacco; "so, if one was unable to distinguish that brig below there from any other, we might conclude that she was the Sea Hawk."

The young Italian stood by, anxiously listening to these observations, for her heart beat eagerly for the return of him who commanded the vessel of which they spoke, and dark were the forebodings of disaster which oppressed her at his long absence.

"Then you think she is the Sea Hawk?" exclaimed Mila. "I pray she may be, for the sweet lady's sake."

"If she is not, they have cleverly imitated her to deceive an old seaman's eyes," returned the old Greek. "You may tell the lady, that, to the best of my belief, yonder vessel is our chief's; but it is necessary to be cautious, when our strength is so much diminished by the absence of many of our best men, and when the cursed Turks are sweeping off the inhabitants from many of the neighbouring islands; and even the British have taken upon themselves to interfere with some of the domestic concerns of our friends."

Nina clasped her hands with an expression of thankfulness, as Mila explained to her what her grandfather had said, her eyes all the time watching the vessel.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "Surely there is a flag flying from the mast-head. That must be a signal to us."

The old Greek again examined the vessel with his telescope.

"It is, lady — it is the rover's flag, under which I have fought in many a hard-contested battle," he exclaimed with animation. "No one else would venture to carry that banner, and we will assemble his followers to receive him with honour. Lady, do you retire to the chamber in the tower, where he will, doubtless, hurry on his arrival, and it might anger him were you not there to welcome him."

Mila repeated what had been said.

"Tell your grandfather I would go down to the beach to receive his chief the instant he sets foot on shore," said Nina, with greater resolution in her tone than she had hitherto expressed when speaking.

The old pirate understood what she said, and turned round on her with an angry frown, which showed that he was a person whom, in his less amiable mood, it would be dangerous to contradict.

"Lady, my orders were, not to allow you out of my sight, except when you were locked up in the tower. I have already disobeyed them more than once, for I knew you would not run away; and I was willing to gratify you and my little girl there — I am not going to neglect them just as he is returning, so you must go back to the tower. It is also a far more fitting place for you to receive him, than exposed to the public gaze on the beach."

A crimson blush overspread the cheek of the lovely Italian, as she heard what Vlacco said, and she knew it was hopeless to attempt making him alter his resolution.

"Then I am a prisoner within those walls," she said, slowly bending her steps towards the tower, accompanied by Mila.

"Very like it, lady," muttered the old pirate. "By my patron saint, I would not have ventured to speak in that way a year ago, when her power was omnipotent in the island. But her rule would not last for ever with our chief, that I guessed from the first, and I prophesy it will before long come to an end altogether. Well, the Sea Hawk will very soon be in the harbour, so I must collect the people to receive him."

Saying this, he climbed to the top of one of the ruined walls of the castle, and taking a horn, which hung by the girdle at his side, he blew a blast, which sounded far and wide throughout the island. It was answered by several sounds in various directions.

In a short time, in twos and threes, armed men were seen approaching; some up the steep path on the side of the ravine, others across the causeway; and as they assembled, they were marshalled in order by Vlacco in front of the tower.

Nina and her companion had placed themselves at the window, to watch the vessel, and the proceedings below.

The gathering of the pirate's followers — for so Vlacco had pronounced the commander of the approaching brig to be, — continued for some time, till Nina observed upwards of fifty persons collected — some of them were very old men, and others were boys, but there were few in the prime of life — all such, it

appeared, having been called away on some expedition with their thief. They were all armed to the teeth, but with a great variety of weapons: some had English muskets, others long Turkish matchlocks, some rifles and fowling-pieces; every one had a dagger and one or more pistols in their belts, generally of the rich workmanship of the East. Their costume, also, was very much varied in character; and though the red skull-cap was generally worn, some had adorned their heads with turbans, even of the green colour, which, as if in mockery of the Turks, should cover the scalps of none but the true descendants of the Prophet. Some wore the white kilt of the mountaineers, others the long trousers and loose waistcoat of the main; indeed, their costume was as varied as their arms, and showed that here were collected persons driven from various parts of Greece by the tyranny of their Ottoman oppressors.

As soon as a sufficient number of the band had assembled, they dragged out, under Vlacco's directions, one of the large guns from the basement story of the tower to the edge of the cliff, where, between the rocks, there was a sort of natural embrasure, partly aided by art, while a platform had been formed for the purpose of mounting a gun there. It was an admirable position, as it so completely overlooked the entrance to the cave, that a shot sent from it could not fail of hitting a vessel attempting to enter.

As Nina watched these proceedings, she could scarcely tell, from the appearance of the armed band and the manner in which Vlacco was placing the gun in the battery, whether he was preparing to receive the approaching vessel in a hostile manner. The idea of treachery came across her mind.

"Can the old pirate," she thought, "meditate the destruction of his chief, for the sake of taking possession of all the riches in the tower?" But she soon discarded her fears as improbable, recollecting that those who were on board with him were all nearly related to those remaining behind.

The purpose Vlacco had in placing the gun there was soon made obvious. It was loaded and fired — the report reverberating in thunder among the rocks. Scarcely had the noise ceased, when puffs of smoke were seen to issue from the vessel's side, a faint echo was heard from seaward.

"That is the usual signal and answer made when our chief returns," said Mila. "There can be no longer any doubt that it is his vessel. See, she seems to be coming on more rapidly than before."

Such was the case, for the sea breeze had lately somewhat freshened, and every sail was spread to woo it.

Majestically the brig glided over the blue sea, like a swan skimming over a tranquil lake. As seen at that distance, she appeared a mass of white canvas; nor did she cause a ripple on the calm, mirror-like surface. On she came, till her deck seemed almost beneath the rock, and the young Italian fancied, in her eagerness, that she could see the countenances of those who walked it, and could distinguish the chief himself from all the rest. Surely none but those well acquainted with the spot would venture thus to run on directly against that rocky shore.

The inhabitants of the opposite village had long recognised the Sea Hawk, and had returned on shore, giving up their anticipations of finding her a stranger, on whom they might pounce unawares, and make her their prize. Some of the larger boats remained just at the mouth of the harbour, to assist the vessel in entering, should the wind fail her at that very juncture, which it was not unlikely to do.

Vlacco had marshalled his men, and leaving a guard of five at the tower, led them down to the beach by the winding path through the ravine. When within four or five hundred fathoms of the rock, the brig's studden-sails came down altogether, every other sail was clewed up, and she shot like an arrow through the narrow opening, her yard-arms almost brushing the rocks on either side; her anchor was let go, and she swung round just clear of the other craft in the centre of the basin.

Her arrival was greeted by loud shouts from the people on shore, which were answered by the crew, and then succeeded inquiries from those in the boats for some who did not appear.

"Alas! they have fallen in the fight," was the answer.

A sigh or an expression of sorrow was their only requiem.

"But what success — what booty have you brought?" was the question most eagerly asked.

"Thanks to our captain's skill and bravery, we have never had more success, or so rich a booty, with so little cost. A few of our brave comrades have paid the debt all must pay; but we have ever come off victorious. Huzza for our brave captain! Huzza for Zappa!"

"Huzza for Zappa — huzza for the gallant Sea Hawk!" was echoed by the people on the beach, taken up by his followers, and repeated by those on the cliffs above, till Nina heard the cry as she sat in her watch-tower. She trembled and turned pale, for her heart longed to see him; yet she almost feared his coming. Poor girl! she little knew what was in store for her.

The captain of the Sea Hawk was the first person to land, accompanied by the young Italian, Paolo. As he stepped on shore, his own particular adherents welcomed him with loud shouts, and he returned this greeting courteously.

"Ah! Vlacco, old friend, I rejoice to see you strong and well," he said, cordially holding out his hand; and in like manner he spoke to others of the band. Whatever he was in other places, and whatever opinion the reader may have formed of him, he was, among his own people, and on board his own ship, in every respect, the chieftain. There was a boldness and independence, even a dignity in his manner, which awed inferior spirits, and made them willingly obey him, though he might have been at the time thoroughly destitute of every quality which constitutes true greatness of character. Zappa had always been successful. It was the cause of his rise — the only secret of his power. He had been fortunate in his first speculation — an attack on an unarmed merchantman, most of whose crew were on shore. He carried off a rich booty, and had the opportunity of boasting of his deeds among those who would

willingly have shared in them. His fame spread. He collected followers, and became a chieftain.

The eyes of the old pirate brightened, and a smile even lighted up his grim visage, as he received this mark of his leader's regard.

"Yes, I am proud to repeat, that all has gone well during the time you have been away," he replied.

"And the Lady Nina," said Zappa, taking the old man aside, "has she appeared to grieve for my absence, and for that of her brother?"

"Grieve — indeed, she has — so says my grandchild Mila. She has done nothing but sigh and sob, and look out on the sea all day long; but whether it was for you or her brother she mourned I cannot say," was old Vlacco's answer.

"Well, I will — I must try and dry her tears now, so I'll to the tower," said the pirate, taking the path up the ravine. "Come, Paolo, we'll go and see how fares your sweet sister."

But Paolo had disappeared. The moment he had touched the shore, while the chief was addressing his followers, he had slipped off, and with quick steps had hurried up the ravine. He was already out of sight, winding his way up the steep ascent which led to the tower. Zappa was excessively angry at this; for he wished to be the first to salute Nina, and he was afraid her brother would inform her of things of which he wished her, at present, to be kept in ignorance. He therefore hurried after him, followed at a distance by Vlacco and his band, who could in no way keep pace with his vigorous and active steps. He hoped to overtake the young Italian; but Paolo was also active, and he was eager to embrace his sister — the only being in the world whom he felt could love him — the only one he had loved.

The door of the tower stood open, and with haste he ascended the steep steps, which led to her chamber. He threw open the door, and stood at the entrance; her arms were round her brother's neck, and she was weeping. For an instant she did not perceive that any one else was present — she looked up, and beheld the pirate. With a cry, she tore herself from her brother's embrace, and, rushing towards Zappa, threw herself into his arms.

"You see, Paolo," he said, in a taunting tone, "your sister will prefer remaining with me, with all my faults on my head, rather than follow your sage advice to return to Italy with you. Is it not so, my Nina — you love me still?"

She hid her face in his bosom, as she murmured, — "It were death, indeed, to quit you."

"You hear her, Paolo. Now listen to me," said Zappa. "For her sake I forgive you for disobeying my orders, and quitting me just now, while I had directions to give you; return on board the ship — you have duties to attend to there, which you must not neglect — there, embrace your sister once more if you wish, and go."

The young Italian stood for a minute with his eyes fixed, glaring on the pirate, as if he were about to speak, and give vent to his indignant anger in words; but he said nothing; and, with a groan, which burst from his bosom,

without giving another look at his sister, he rushed out of the door, and down the steps, nor stopped till he reached the beach.

"You look thinner than usual, my Nina; and the brightness of your eye has lost somewhat of its lustre since I left you," said Zappa, as they sat at the window of the tower, looking out on the moonlit sea; while within the chamber the light of a silver lamp, suspended from the roof, cast a brilliant radiance on every side, and on a table, spread with crystal goblets, and dishes glittering with silver and jewels, on which a luxurious repast had been served.

"My health will soon be restored now you have returned," answered Nina, returning the fond pressure of his hand. "But I have been almost a prisoner in this tower; and old Vlacco, whom you left as governor in your absence, would have made me one completely, had I not insisted on enjoying a little freedom at times with his grandchild, Mila. Your absence, too, was so much longer than usual that I feared for your safety, and for that of my poor brother."

"Old Vlacco was a strict jailor, was he?" said Zappa. "Why, you know, my pretty bird, I warned him to beware lest you should take flight, as once you tried to do, urged by the persuasions of your brother; and, I suppose he thought he was to obey his orders to the letter; but now we have returned, your cause of anxiety will have ceased, and I believe you love me too well ever again to wish to leave me. I believe, also, your brother has been taught the folly of his conduct too well to attempt it again. But a truce with subjects which are disagreeable. Here's to your health, sweet one; I pledge you in this sparkling goblet of Samian wine, and I will try to drive away your melancholy by recounting some of the adventures of my voyage." As he spoke, he stretched out his hand to the table, and seizing a large glass of wine, he drank it off at a draught. "Ah! this cheers the heart after the hardships of the ocean. Wine is a glorious thing, Nina; it banishes the gloomy thoughts which will ever and anon intrude into the hearts even of the bravest. But I promised you my adventures, sweet one. Soon after we sailed from hence, we had a few skirmishes with Turkish vessels; we captured and destroyed two, but they had little on board them of value, and the men began to grow discontented with our want of success, and at last I resolved to fly at nobler game. By the by, I happened to fall in with a Neapolitan vessel; the crew were your countrymen, Nina, and I would not injure them, though, I believe, some of my people, unknown to me, bored holes in her to try add sink her. While we were engaged in taking out whatever was of value, a ship of war hove in sight, and we were obliged to leave her. I then stood towards the coast of Italy — "

"Oh! do not tell me of such dreadful things. I cannot, I do not believe you. I thought you were only engaged in fighting the enemies of your country, and of the Christian race, and you confess to committing deeds which would make you a pirate — a foe to all nations. Say that you were joking."

Zappa laughed heartily as he answered, — "A prejudice, my pretty Nina; it is one you must conquer, too, with all speed. What! despise my free and independent profession. You, my wife, think ill of piracy, and the brave rovers

who commit it. Ha! ha! ha! that must no longer be, let me assure you. To my story — you interrupt me — where was I — oh, yes! sailing towards the coast of Italy. We ran on till we sighted a lofty mountain of Sicily, and just then fell in with a speronara, owned by a man with whom I have had transactions, and whom I knew I could trust. I engaged him to take me to Malta; and, with your brother as my companion, I visited that place, and learned what vessels were about to sail.

"One bore a rich freight; we followed, and took her. Now, Nina, I am going to make you jealous. An English lady was on board; she was young, beautiful, and the heiress, I understand, of much wealth. She is now my prisoner, and I intend to bring her here to place her in your charge, Nina. But remember, no jealousy — for though you are lovely, you will have to acknowledge that she is so also — yet I say not equal to you, sweet one."

As Zappa was speaking, Nina rose, and as she stood in the recess of the window, with the beams of the pale moon lighting up her countenance, which would otherwise have been cast in shadow, her figure appeared to grow more pure and ethereal, even to the eyes of the fierce and lawless pirate. Her fair and slender hands were clasped on her bosom, while she turned on him a look in which pain and reproach were mingled, as she answered, —

"I would gladly do your will in all things; I would willingly afford aid to one in distress, to one who undeservedly suffers, who is torn from her kindred and friends; but speak not to me of jealousy, Zappa, I have trusted you too much, I love you too devotedly, as you well know, to be influenced by such a feeling. Let the lady arrive when she may she is welcome."

Poor girl! even as she spoke, the first pangs of the deadly poison had shot through her heart, though she knew not what was the cause of the feeling which oppressed her. She thought it was the indifference of his tone, the light carelessness of his words which gave her pain, yet he was always accustomed to speak in that way, for to things serious or sacred he paid little regard.

"I will not, then, suppose you jealous, Nina, since you like it not to be suspected that you are even capable of the feeling," answered the pirate, throwing himself back on the divan, and laughing; "I shall not, however, yet put you to the test, but when the lady arrives you will treat her as one to whom all courtesy is due."

"I have promised to do so," replied the Italian girl, still standing in the position she had assumed at a distance from him.

"Then do not look so cold, and glance your eye repulsively on me," exclaimed Zappa; "one might suppose that I were a monster unfit for one so fair and pure as you to gaze on."

Nina burst into tears.

"You are unkind and I am weak," she exclaimed passionately. "You confess to me that you are a pirate and a robber, that your hand is stained with the blood of your fellow-men — of men not slain because they are the enemies of your country, but because they attempted to guard the treasure committed to

their charge, and I ought to loathe and detest you, and yet I cannot — I love, I love you still."

And she sank down on her knees at his feet, and hiding her face in the cushions of the divan, gave way to a flood of tears, while her bosom heaved as if she were struggling for existence.

Zappa gazed at her for some minutes without speaking, till the paroxysm of the fit had passed away, when compunction, or it might have been a less amiable feeling, seized him, and stooping down, he raised her in his arms.

"I was but trying you, lovely one," he said, in a soft tone. "I am not the blood-stained monster I painted myself. My hand has never slain a fellow-man except in self-defence; and is not so unworthy as you would believe to be clasped in yours. Besides, Nina, you are, as far as your church makes you so, my wedded wife — for good or for evil, for wealth or for poverty, and must not, sweet one, play the tyrant over me. But a truce with this folly — I am weary of it," he cried, starting up; "I have many directions to give about my brave barque, which I must not forget — even for your sake, — and I must see old Vlacco, and consult with him about improving the fortifications of our island — for, with enemies on all sides, these are not times when we can trust to our remote position as before, and to such old defences as nature has provided. Farewell; and when I return, let me see the accustomed smile resting on those sweet lips."

He kissed her as he spoke; and, without waiting for an answer, he quitted the chamber, and she heard him descending the steps of the tower. She hid her face in her hands, and there seemed but little prospect of her having the power to obey his commands.

Chapter Twenty.

We left Ada Garden virtually a prisoner on board a vessel which she believed a Greek man-of-war. Day after day the voyage continued without the anchor being dropped. Sometimes the vessel was steered in one direction, sometimes in another; but, as she judged by the appearance of the sun, as it was seen from the cabin windows at sunset, they were verging towards the east and north. Fortunately the weather continued fine, and they were able to have the ports open the whole of the day, which in a slight degree made her amends for being deprived of the free air of the deck. Generally, also, the wind was fair, when it came in cool and refreshing through the ports; but some days it blew more ahead, and then Ada could feel the vessel heel over as the canvas felt its force; and, at times, she judged that they were beating along some coast, or through a narrow passage, as the continuation of the same land was seen on every alternate tack.

Signor Paolo had visited the cabin every day; but he was silent and reserved as at first, and she failed to obtain any information from him — though, latterly, she thought he appeared as if he would have spoken more; but, each time he was about to do so, fear seemed to make him hesitate, and he said nothing.

Her health, under his judicious treatment, had gradually improved till she had recovered as much of her accustomed strength as she could expect to do, without the benefit of more air and exercise than she could enjoy in the cabin. But her spirits remained much depressed at the uncertainty of her own future fate, of that of her uncle, and with the thoughts of the anguish she knew Fleetwood would endure at her loss.

"Could I but let him know," she thought, "that I am alive, and am suffering no great inconvenience, oh, how it would relieve my heart!"

She little thought that at that very time her lover was scouring the seas on board his ship in search of her.

At last the vessel was once more before the wind, slowly gliding through the water. There seemed to her more bustle and animation than usual on deck. The faint sound of a gun came off from the shore — it was answered by a loud report from on board, accompanied by a wild cheer from those on deck; and, a short time afterwards she felt that the anchor was let go; strange voices were heard alongside — and looking out of the stern-ports, high cliffs arose before her eyes. She and Marianna continued gazing out of their prison at the strange scent before them, and at the number of boats filled with uncouth, savage-looking beings pulling in boats round the ship. Among others, one appeared to leave the vessel and take a direct course towards the shore.

"Oh! signora, look there — look there!" cried Marianna. "There is Signor Paolo going to leave us."

Ada did look, but her eye scarcely rested on Paolo, for it caught sight of one

who sat next to him in the boat. She grasped her attendant's arm as she whispered, "My worst fears are realised. There goes the pirate Zappa, and we are his prisoners."

"Oh! don't say such a thing, signora," cried Marianna, trembling; "I shall die of fright. Yet, surely he could not have had any command on board such a quiet, well-ordered vessel as this has been?"

"I fear that I am not mistaken in his identity — and his appearance explains everything," said Ada. "What can he intend now by leaving the vessel? Try the doors and see if we are still prisoners in the cabin."

Marianna found the door closed as before, and she and her mistress sat down more alarmed than they had been hitherto; Ada feeling that her last hope of escape had vanished.

They remained thus for some time, till they were startled by the abrupt entrance of Paolo into the cabin. He apologised, on seeing Ada's look of surprise.

"Pardon me, signora; I have been sent by the captain of the ship to express his regret that your apartments on shore are not arranged, and to regret that you will have to remain some time longer on board."

"Excuses are superfluous, when no choice is allowed me but to obey," returned Ada, with more haughtiness in her manner than usual; for, having seen Paolo in company with the pirate, she could no longer regard him in the same light she had before done.

The young man seemed at once to observe and feel the change.

"I deeply regret, signora, that you should have cause to complain," he exclaimed, in a voice in which sorrow mingled with passion; "but, oh! believe me, that I am not more free than you, and act under the orders of one who has the power to compel were I to prove disobedient."

"I believe you," said Ada; "and now tell me, who is this person who ventures to hold me a prisoner?"

"You will know too soon, lady, but my lips must not inform you," returned Paolo. "However, if it can afford you any satisfaction to know it, be assured that I will watch carefully over you, and that my directions are, not to quit the vessel except to accompany you on shore."

"It must be a satisfaction to those in distress to know that they have a friend who interests himself in their welfare," replied Ada, in a softened tone, as Paolo, with an inclination of his head, withdrew.

For two whole days did Ada Garden and her attendant remain inmates of the vessel. On the third Paolo made his appearance to announce that accommodation was prepared for them on shore, and that a boat was waiting alongside the vessel to convey them there. For the first time Ada stepped on the deck of the vessel, and, after having been shut up so long below, the full, bright glare of the sun almost dazzled her eyes, and prevented her seeing objects clearly. As she recovered her sight, she observed that the vessel, on board which she had spent so long a time, was a brig, that she was in beautiful order, and

had eight guns run out on either side. A few seamen in Greek costume were employed in the fore part of the vessel in repairing the rigging, but none of them took the slightest notice of her, as Paolo handed her to the gangway, followed by Marianna. At his summons two men came aft, and brought up her boxes from below, which were lowered into the boat alongside, into which he then assisted her and her attendant. He then gave the signal to shove off, and a few strokes of the oars carried the boat to the shore. Ada looked round her with surprise at the wild beauty and perfect tranquillity of the scene. In the centre of the bay lay the brig at anchor, her hull and tall masts, and the tracery of her spars and rigging reflected in the calm clear water. Her sails were closely furled, and no one appeared above the bulwarks to show that she was tenanted by human beings. The two misticoes lay inside of her, without sign of any one being on board them, and the boats belonging to the cove were drawn up on the beach, but the fishermen had deserted their nets, and not a person appeared in any direction. She gazed up at the lofty cliffs, and at the picturesque ravine towards which Paolo pointed, as they landed, to indicate their path, at the same time expressing his regret that there were no means of conveying her up it except by a litter borne by men.

The perfect calmness of the whole scene, its unusual beauty, and the freshness of the air served to reassure her, and she began to experience an elasticity of spirits she had not for a long time felt. Paolo led her up the path I have before described, to the platform on the summit of the cliffs on which the ruined castle stood.

"This is a wild spot, lady, but not wanting in beauty; and the tower you see before you is to be your abode while you remain on the island," said Paolo, pointing to a tower which was nearer the causeway, and had not so extensive a view as the one I have described, but yet it overlooked the sea, and more of the interior of the island. Paolo knocked at a door at the base, and it was opened by the young Greek girl Mila, who saluted the strangers with a smile of welcome, and then led them away up a flight of steps to an upper story, where, throwing open another door, she ushered them into a chamber, at the appearance of which Ada could not help uttering an exclamation of surprise; and Marianna, who had completely lost all her fears in company with Signor Paolo, clapped her hands with delight. The time had, indeed, been well employed, which had, since their arrival, converted that ruined tower into so magnificent an abode.

The pirate must have ransacked all his stores of silks and satins to fit up the room.

"The roof has probably been formed some time, but all else has been accomplished during the last three days," said Paolo, as they entered. "That was the reason, lady, of your not landing before."

The style was very similar to that of the other tower; but the hangings were, perhaps, richer, and the carpets more valuable; attention had been paid to what might be supposed English taste. There were a greater number of tables and chairs, and there was even a book-case fastened against the wall, though the

books it contained were few, and not of a very select description.

There were two guitars and a music-book on one of the tables, and the walls were adorned with pictures, and a magnificent silver lamp hung from the centre; and, indeed, everything had been done to give the room a cheerful and habitable appearance. On either side were curtains across a corner of the room; and, on drawing them, Ada perceived that there were couches arranged, and furnished with the finest linen, showing that the chamber was intended for their exclusive residence, perhaps also, their prison. Mila busied herself in showing the arrangements of the room, and Paolo explained that she was anxious to serve the stranger in the best way she could. Ada intimated that she could not but be satisfied with the care taken for her comfort, and Paolo, suspecting that she would prefer being left alone, called Mila, and took his departure.

Paolo had been gone some time, when a knock at the door was heard, and Marianna ran to open it. As she did so, she started back with a cry of surprise, for there stood before her the pirate Zappa.

Ada rose as she saw him, for she felt that, from the first, it would be necessary to assume a dignity and fearlessness of manner, in order to gain any influence over him.

"The Prince Argiri Caramitzo, I believe I have the honour of seeing," she said, bowing.

"The same, signora, who has the happiness of welcoming you to Greece, and has had that of rescuing you from a great danger," replied Zappa, in his most courteous tone, advancing a step only into the chamber. "He now comes to express a hope that you are satisfied with the arrangements made for you, and will be contented to remain an inhabitant of this island till communications can be opened with your friends, in order to restore you to them."

"I need not tell you, prince, that I am most anxious to communicate with my friends, and must beg you to tell me by what means I can do so," said Ada.

"The opportunity will, doubtless, soon occur," replied the pirate. "But, in the mean time, I have to assure you that I have taken measures to let your friends know of your safety — though, for reasons which I may hereafter explain to you, not the place of your abode."

"I understand you, signor; and I beg now to thank you for the courtesy and delicacy with which you have treated me," said Ada. "And I will ask you as a farther favour, to tell me what has become of the relative who left Malta with me. Is he still living?"

As she spoke her voice trembled, and a tear started in her eye.

"Indeed, lady, I would gladly answer your question if I could. I know nothing of your relative," replied Zappa. "But I am wearying you with my presence. I came but to ascertain that you were satisfied with such humble accommodation as I could afford you, and will no longer intrude myself on your presence. Lady, farewell; and should any suspicions enter your mind about me, I entreat you to banish them; and to believe that, however much appearances are against me, I

am not guilty."

It would be difficult to describe the tone with which those words were uttered, or the polished bow Zappa gave as he quitted the room, fully believing that he had made a great stride in winning over the feelings of his prisoner, to look on him with regard.

A whole day passed away without the appearance of Paolo, or any person except little Mila. The young Greek girl was her only attendant, besides Marianna; but as she could not make herself understood, she seldom remained long together in the room. Had she even not felt herself a prisoner, the day would have passed wearily away with so few means of amusing herself at her disposal. She examined the books which had been placed on the shelves: they were mostly Italian, though she recognised a few as having been on board the Zodiac. In vain, however, she tried to give her attention to them, for whenever she did so her thoughts wandered away till they were lost in the painful reflection which her position naturally suggested. Among her luggage were the means of employing herself in such fancy-work as was the fashion in those days, but she soon threw it down in despair, as rather increasing than relieving her anxiety.

Such was not the case with Marianna, who quickly recovered her spirits, and plied her needle with her usual diligence, and laughed and sang, as if nothing out of the way had occurred. One of her great sources of pleasure was, in the intervals of her work, to look through a telescope which Paolo had placed in the room; it was on a brass stand, and had been, probably, among the cargo of some vessel plundered by Zappa or his associates. The view, as I have said, from the window, extended over a wide range of sea, along the greater part of the east side of the island and into the interior; and a glimpse could just be caught of the mouth of the harbour, though the vessels lying there were not visible. It was in the afternoon of the second day after their arrival that Marianna was amusing herself with looking through the glass, when she uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Oh, signora, signora — do come, and look!" she cried. "There is a vessel coming to the island; for I see her white sails just rising out of the water. She is coming to take us home — I know she is."

Ada flew to the telescope — her heart beating with agitation at the very mention of release, though her hopes were not so sanguine as those of her damsel. She looked earnestly for some time at the sail which Marianna had observed; but, as she withdrew her eye from the tube, she shook her head with a look of disappointment.

"The sail looks very small," she said. "So I fear, Marianna, it cannot be a ship of war, and no other can afford us assistance."

"Oh, but it is yet a long way off, signora," urged the Maltese girl. "When it comes nearer it will appear much bigger, as I have often observed from the windows of your uncle's house in Valetta a little sail no bigger than a pocket-handkerchief, which has grown larger, and larger, and larger, till it has become a

mighty ship with a hundred great guns looking out of her sides. Who knows but what this may turn out a big ship sent out by the King of England, with Signor Fleetwood as captain, to look after you? My heart tells me that she is a friend."

Ada smiled mournfully at her young attendant's over sanguine prognostications, in which she could so little participate.

"I fear you are wrong in this case, my good Marianna," she answered. "You observe that the vessel we see is small, but we can already distinguish three distinct sails, and soon the hull itself will rise out of the water, and then we shall be better able to judge of its proper dimensions. I can already see her without the glass. Tell me if the bulwarks are not in sight."

"Yes, signora, I can distinguish the dark mark of the body of the vessel, and she seems to come on quickly towards us," answered the Maltese girl, who was bending down upon a table drawn towards the window, with her eye to the glass.

The vessel they were looking at was rather to the west of the island, towards which she was standing close-hauled beating up against an easterly wind, bound probably up the Dardanelles. The sea was calm, and glittering in the sunbeams, which gave it the appearance of a plain of molten silver sprinkled with diamonds — for to nothing else can I compare its dazzling lustre. The breeze had been uncertain all the morning, now so light as not to disturb the mirror-like surface of the sea, now freshening up again so as to send the vessel along rapidly through the water. It had, however, lately, in shore, given signs of dying away altogether. The stranger stood on till she fetched up, almost looking into the mouth of the concealed cove, either totally unconscious of the danger of her proceeding, or indifferent to the consequences.

The latter could scarcely be the case; for, as Ada again looked at her through the telescope, she observed that she was a vessel apparently of little more than a hundred-and-twenty or thirty tons burden. Her rig was that of a brigantine — the foremast having the top and spars of a brig, the mainmast carrying fore-and-aft sails like a schooner. When she had stood in within a quarter of a mile of the shore she tacked, either fearing to get becalmed should she approach nearer, or being, uncertain of the depth of water. If it was to avoid the former inconvenience, it was too late, for, scarcely had she gone about than her sails flapped idly against the masts, and she lay unable to make any way at all.

Ada was now convinced that she was a stranger — a merchantman, probably, as she judged by the cut of the sails, the short yards, and the few men who appeared on her decks. She had two guns, it is true, but they were of little weight of metal, and could have been of slight use in repelling a really determined attack.

Ada trembled for her fate, when she recollected her suspicions of the lawless character of the inhabitants of the island. As she was watching the persons on the deck of the vessel, she saw that there was suddenly some confusion among them; several persons hurried from below, and some appeared to be surveying the mouth of the harbour with their telescopes. The cause was soon apparent,

for as she looked in that direction, a long low dark object was seen to steal out from behind the rocks, like a snake from the grass, and dart towards them.

It was one of the misticoes, with her yards and sails stowed along the deck, and impelled by twenty long oars, pulled by twice that number of men, while as many more stood in the after part, and at the bows, with their matchlocks in their hands ready for use. In the bow, also, was a long brass gun on a swivel, pointed towards the doomed vessel.

The stranger was, however, manned by no cowardly hearts. As soon as they saw the nature of their enemy, they cast loose their two guns, loaded them, and ran them both out on the port side, which was the one then bearing on the shore. They knew that escape was impossible, and that they had little hope of mercy, so they lost no time in firing, on the chance of striking the enemy between wind and water, and compelling him to return. Unhappily, neither shot told with much useful effect. One struck the water just ahead of her, the other hit her gunnel and killed two of the people, which only exasperated the others, and made them pull the harder to get on board before receiving any other similar visitors.

"Oh! Jesu Maria," exclaimed Marianna, hiding her eyes in her hands. "What can be the reason that the vessel there should fire at the boat?"

"I am afraid we shall be witnesses of a dreadful scene," said Ada; "and yet I cannot withdraw my eyes from it. Oh! what will become of the poor people on board the vessel if those wretches in the mistico get near her? See! they are my countrymen, too, for there flies the red ensign of England."

The ensign had been hoisted as the brigantine fired; but while watching the Greek vessel she had not observed it. The English, undaunted, set up a loud cheer, as they again run out their guns; but the pirates, taught by experience, pulled round under her stern, where her guns could not reach them, and let fly their own long pieces at them. As they were much lower than she was, the shot injured no one on deck; but flew through the fore-topsail. They did not again attempt to fire; but trusting to their vast superiority of numbers, they dashed boldly alongside, with the object of carrying her by boarding. The English had time to get one of their guns over to the starboard side, on which the mistico boarded them, and to fire directly down into her, before the pirates were able to leap up their side.

It was too late, however, to save them. The Greeks swarmed over the bows and quarters, and up the side, their swords in their teeth, and though the English seamen fought in a manner worthy of their name, Ada saw, with anguish, that they were quickly cut down or overpowered, pressed upon by overwhelming numbers, and in three minutes the islanders had full possession of the vessel. It made her heart sick as she beheld the catastrophe, which she had hoped against probability, might have been averted. Intensely interested as she was to learn the fate of her countrymen, her agitation prevented her from seeing more, and obliged her to withdraw her eyes from the painful sight. Marianna, however, took her place at the telescope.

“Oh, signora!” she exclaimed, “the saints protect us! But those cruel wretches are throwing the bodies of the poor English they have murdered overboard, before even their hearts can have ceased to throb. Wicked villains! I hope they won’t treat the living in the same way.”

“I’m afraid none remained alive,” said Ada, shuddering. “But what are they doing now?”

“They seem engaged in making their own vessel fast to the other, to prevent her from sinking, I suppose. I wish they may both go down to the bottom together. It would serve the wretches right.”

“God will punish them in His own good time, or the power of civilised nations will be exerted to perform His will,” replied Ada. “Our religion teaches us, remember, not to wish evil even to our worst enemies. But, ah, there comes out the other mistico to the assistance of their friends.”

In a short time the last-named vessel had reached the brigantine, and as soon as she was lashed alongside, all hands were busily engaged in transferring the cargo to their own craft, for they had managed to stop the shot-hole in the side of the one which had been engaged. The brigantine’s anchor had been dropped, and her sails clewed up; and as soon as the two misticoes were laden, they returned to the harbour. In another hour or so, they were again alongside the prize, and engaged in their work of plunder. They laboured hard till they had transferred everything of value from her hold, and they then commenced stripping her masts of the sails and rigging; and in collecting other things from her deck and cabin which might be useful — not forgetting her guns, and her small store of powder and shot. By the time they had completed their work the sun had set, and loaded with plunder they returned to port. As they left the side of the unfortunate vessel, a shout of exultation escaped them; and soon after, Ada perceived through the gloom a thick smoke ascending from the hatchways, followed quickly by forked flames, which leaped upwards, and rapidly enveloped the masts and lower, rigging. The whole hull was rapidly in a blaze, which lighted up with a lurid glare the two misticoes; the grim visages of their fierce crew, their red caps, and varied-coloured costume being clearly visible at that distance through the telescope. The fiery tinge falling also on the rocky cliffs, and the towers and walls of the castle, and converting the tranquil surface of the ocean into, seemingly, a sea of blood.

The brigantine burned fiercely — there must have been some inflammable substance which had formed part of her cargo remaining in her hold. From the two small stern-ports, which had been left open, the flames burst forth in jets of fire, as also from every hatchway, fore and aft, till the decks fell in, and the masts, like two pillars of fire, came rushing down, and hissing into the water. At length the empty hull sunk beneath the surface, and all was again dark.

“I fear, signora, we are in a complete nest of pirates,” said Marianna, breaking the silence which she had maintained after the catastrophe.

“I fear so, too,” replied Ada; “but that burning vessel may prove a beacon to light our friends to our rescue.”

Chapter Twenty One.

Ada Garden sat in the chamber of the tower which had been awarded to her as her prison. Her Maltese attendant had accompanied young Mila to a short distance from the castle — but she was not alone. A figure knelt at her feet in the attitude of the deepest devotion; his head was bowed down to the ground, and sobs burst from his bosom: — it was the young Italian, whom we have known under the name of Paolo.

"Oh, hear me, lady!" he exclaimed passionately, — "oh, hear me, before you dismiss me for ever from your presence. I cannot unsay what I have said — I have dared to tell you that I love you with the fondest, the deepest devotion — I have done so from the first moment I saw you; but hear my excuses. I felt myself alone and desolate in the world; I beheld you, bright, innocent, and beautiful, exposed, I knew, to the most dreadful danger, and I determined to save you at all risks. I knew not then that it was love — I thought it was compassion for one so fair. I saw you brought on board the pirate vessel, the accursed Sea Hawk, unconscious of your state. My medical knowledge would, I knew, be of service: I suggested that your life hung on a thread, that the slightest agitation might destroy you, and I so worked on the fears of the miscreant chief, that I persuaded him to confide you entirely into my charge. I ventured even to administer a narcotic, to render you insensible when Zappa wished to see you, and to frighten him still more into the belief that you were on the point of death. Day after day I saw you, I felt that your safety depended on me, that I might even yet be the means of rescuing you from the thraldom under which you are placed, and day after day my love increased — I have fed upon it till it has become a part of my very existence, and can end but with my life. Then tell me, lady — tell me, how could you expect me to do otherwise than confess the love which is consuming me? I do not ask yet for a return of my devotion — I do not expect it till I have accomplished far more than I yet have done to deserve it; but yet, I do say, when my task is fulfilled — when I have placed you in safety, and can surround you with the luxuries to which you are accustomed — when I can restore you to your proper station in life, that must be my reward, or I will place a dagger in your hand, and bid you strike home to my heart; for that would be the only other boon I would ask of you — the only other happiness I could enjoy."

Ada looked at the unhappy young man with compassion, and her bosom heaved with emotion; for she saw the sincerity of his passion, and it grieved her heart to wound his feelings; but yet, she could not deceive him.

"Signor, I cannot blame you. I do not complain of your addressing me in words of love, however much I am grieved to hear them. I am grateful for all you have done for me — I would endeavour to prove to you, had I the power, how grateful I am, and for all you purpose doing for me. I feel that to you I owe my

preservation from dangers too dreadful to contemplate. I venture to entreat you still to exert your generous efforts to aid me, and to enable me to return to my friends; and yet I tell you that I cannot give you more than my deep, my everlasting gratitude. My love, signor, were it a worthy recompense for your exertions, I have not to give — my heart as well as my troth belongs to another."

The fierce passions which rest in the bosoms of the inhabitants of those southern climes, have far more powerful effects than any similar emotions on the less sensitively constituted frames of the northern nations. Scarcely had Ada uttered these words, than, casting a glance at her features, as if to ascertain that he heard aright, and was not in some frightful dream, the young Italian fell prostrate on his face before her. Horrified and trembling, she gazed at him without moving, for she thought he was dead; but at length as she stepped over him, his heavy breathing assured her that he still lived, and she exerted all her strength to raise him, as she was afraid, for his sake, to call any one to her assistance. A jar of water was in the room, and she dashed some of its contents over his face, and placed him so that the air from the window might come in and revive him. It was now her turn to act the part of guardian angel; and Captain Fleetwood would have pardoned her, as she bent over him, had she felt as a sister for the pale and unhappy youth before her. At last her efforts were crowned with success. He opened his eyes and gazed at her with a look to which intelligence soon returned. As he did so, he endeavoured to rise; but the agitation of his feelings had been too violent to allow him so quickly to recover, and he again sank down on the ground, where he remained for some minutes, endeavouring to regain his scattered thoughts.

"Where am I? What dreadful event has occurred?" he at length muttered. "Methought some demon came with lightning in his hand to blast the lovely prospect which an angel had opened to my view."

He was silent — the sound of his own voice had the effect of restoring him to his senses. He rose, though with difficulty, and stood before her, supporting himself by a chair.

"Pardon me, lady," he said, his voice still faltering as he spoke; "I have been weak, and have acted wrongly, madly, I own it. The words I have uttered I should not have spoken till you were free, and had no longer more to expect from me; but oh, forget them — learn to look upon me as before I committed that fatal error. I ask no recompense for what I have done, I ask none for what I may do. All I entreat you is, to allow me to serve you faithfully — to obey your behests, whatever they may be, even though to do so break my very heart-strings. Lady, for your sake I would preserve my rival, even though the next instant I were to see you clasped in his arms."

Ada was moved, and she held out her hand to the young man; for though to English ears his language might appear overstrained, and his sentiments exaggerated and unnatural, for an Italian she knew it was composed and rational, and it gave her confidence in the sincerity of his professions.

"I trust you, signor," she answered, struggling to keep down her own

emotion. “Believe me, you have my sincerest regard, and I were, indeed, base not to feel the deepest gratitude. Remember, then, that I rely on you to serve me whenever I may ask you, and place my safety and hope of ultimate escape in your hands.”

“And it shall not be misplaced,” answered Paolo. “But, lady, I have longed to banish from your mind the prejudice you must naturally entertain against me, at seeing me in this island, with such company; but believe me that it is sorely against my will. I am here by compulsion, a prisoner like yourself, though with more apparent liberty. To comprehend it I must tell you my unhappy history, which I would long ago have done, had I had the opportunity; but I feared to do so in presence of your attendant, on whose discretion I knew not if I could rely; and I have also, lately, been so closely watched by my oppressor, Zappa, that I have been unable to visit you when I thought you might be alone. If you will now, lady, listen to me, it will serve to calm my spirits, and will contribute towards placing me in the position I would enjoy in your estimation.”

Ada assured him that even when her suspicions as to the character of the Sea Hawk had been excited, she could not suppose that he was as guilty as those with whom she found him associated, although she had not believed him altogether as blameless as she should be rejoiced to find that he in reality was.

“Thanks, lady, thanks, you already relieve my heart of a great weight, by saying so,” he exclaimed, checking the passionate expression which was stealing into his tone and manner. “To convince you further that you did me but justice, I will give you a brief outline of my history: —

“You see before you the last remnant of an old, and noble, and once powerful family. My fathers were lords of a broad domain in the neighbourhood of Brindisi, among the wild and rugged mountains which form the eastern spur of the Appenines, and abut on the shores of the Adriatic. They first rose and flourished in the days when the sword of the strong hand could win lands and power, and when, whatever was lost by the extravagance or folly of one, was easily replaced by the bravery and daring of his successor. But in later years, although the former means of repairing their damaged property no longer existed, yet, still with rather frequent succession, a Lord of Montifalcone would assume the family honours, who failed not to squander away property which he had no means of replacing. Estate after estate was sold for several generations, till, at last, my father found himself the heir to a half-ruined castle on the borders of the ocean, and a few thousand acres of unproductive land in the same neighbourhood. My mother, who is now a saint in heaven, was as much so as a mortal can be when on earth; and although my noble father inherited much of the true pride of ancient ancestry, he was free from the folly and vice of his predecessors, and he resolved to exert all his energies in repairing his broken fortunes, and to hand down a fair estate to his progeny.

“By prudence and economy, he in a great manner, succeeded in doing so; and as he considered that idleness had been the cause of the ruin his ancestors had wrought on the family, he determined to give all his own children

professions, which should afford them employment, and the means of support, despising the spirit which considered any employment besides that of arms beneath the dignity of a noble.

"My eldest brother was, accordingly, educated to the profession of the law, while I studied that of medicine. I had three sisters, all equally lovely, and endued, apparently, with the same amiable qualities. The eldest married young, and went to live in the neighbourhood of Naples; the second died; and the history of the third is closely interwoven with mine. By husbanding his resources, and carefully attending to the nature of the soil, my father had so improved the farms on his estate, that their produce was increased threefold; and as he spent the greater part of the income arising from it in still further improving it, devoting only what was absolutely necessary for the education of his sons, the produce went on increasing, to the surprise of all his neighbours.

"The castle had been put in sufficient repair, to make a suitable residence for the family, and thither, during the time my brother and I could escape from our professional studies, we eagerly hastened to spend it in the society of those to whom we were ardently attached. Our greatest favourite, if we loved one more than the other, was our sister Nina, for she was the youngest. She was the most fascinating and lovely, though we confessed that if she had a fault, her disposition was too yielding and confiding — guileless herself, she could not credit that guile existed in others. Hers was one of those characters which, from its very innocence, would be held more sacred in the eyes of an upright, honourable man, though it exposes its possessor to be made the dupe of the designing villain. One might have supposed that our remote and quiet home would have been free from the accursed presence of such a one. Never was a family more united or more happy. Our father was in the enjoyment of vigorous health, and proud of his family, and the success of his laudable projects. Our sainted mother rejoiced when he did, and their children had a contented present, and could look forward with confidence to the future. I have not described the castle in which we lived. It was one of great antiquity, though, as it had been added to, in subsequent years, the walls were mostly sound, and in good repair. It stood on the summit of a rocky cliff, overlooking the sea, though of no great height, so that the waves, during a wintry storm, could dash up to the very base, and send showers of the sparkling spray over the walls. There was a deep moat surrounding it, with a drawbridge over it; and, besides the main part, which was of great extent, there were walls with passages through them, and strong towers at each angle with which they communicated. So numerous and intricate were the passages, and so dark and dangerous, from their ruined condition, that even I, a son of the house, had never entirely explored them.

"Inland of the castle was an extensive and now highly-cultivated plain, the property of my father, who could thus from the summit of his tower survey the greater portion of his estates. Beyond the plain rose range above range of lofty and almost inaccessible mountains which gave a character of peculiar wildness to the scenery. Indeed, during the winter, I have never seen a spot partaking

more of savage grandeur than my paternal castle; with the stormy ocean roaring on one side, and the cloud-capped Appenines towering to the skies on the other.

"It was my delight as a boy, with my gun in my hand, to hunt the wild chamois among the remote recesses and rugged precipices of the one, or to bound in my light boat over the dancing waves of the other.

"Among such scenes was I born, and I believe they gave a tone to my mind, which subsequent intercourse with the world did not altogether wear out; and such as may be supposed had a still more powerful effect on the mind of my sisters, who enjoyed less means of having their effect counteracted.

"One night during the middle of winter, when all the members of the family were assembled in the great hall, sitting round the large dish of burning embers, to keep ourselves warm, chilled as we should otherwise have been from the effects of a furious gale, which blew across the Adriatic from the snowy mountains of Albania, a report was brought in by one of the farm servants, that a vessel was driving towards a dangerous reef of rocks, which ran out to sea, at a short distance from the southward of the castle. My brother and I seized our hats and cloaks, and bidding the rest of the family not to be alarmed for our safety, we rushed out to see what assistance we might render to the hapless crew of the vessel, should any of them escape alive. She was still at some little distance, and apparently not aware of the imminence of her danger, for she was firing guns of distress to call those on the shore to her assistance, as if, in the situation she was placed, any human aid could be afforded her. The sea was running to a prodigious height, and dashing with the wildest fury on the rocky shore, and not a boat we had ever seen could have lived in it an instant. The wind too blew in awful gusts, so that we frequently could scarcely stand, and it sent the foam flying over us in showers, till we were drenched with it to the skin, as we passed along to the edge of the cliff; on our way to the spot near which we judged the hapless vessel would strike the rocks. We had collected as many of our people as we could find, and were supplied with ropes and spars to enable us to save the lives of any, should they be washed on shore from the wreck.

"Now, mark me, lady, we believed that we were performing a truly Christian and virtuous act, and yet it was the cause of all the subsequent misery! and those I loved far better than myself endured. We were hastening to preserve from destruction the accursed viper who was to sting us to death. Thus, Heaven ordained it should be, and its ways are dark and intricate, beyond my comprehension, for surely it is against all the rules one can conceive of justice that a virtuous action should be thus rewarded. Perhaps you will say that His ways are inscrutable, and, that as we have neither the power, nor have we the right to attempt to read them, so we should not venture to cavil at His ordinances, but humbly believe that the ultimate result will be for our benefit. I believe it is so, lady; or it may be for a punishment; but it is bitter, very bitter, oftentimes to bear. But I am wandering from my story. We could watch the

progress of the fated vessel by the occasional flashes of her guns, and the still more vivid ones of the lightning which darted from the dark clouds, and we could see that she still had some sail set, with which she was endeavouring to haul off the shore. On she flew, plunging madly into the foaming waves, when, just as we reached the beach, she was lifted on the summit of a sea, and crashed downward on the reef. We fancied that we could hear the despairing shriek of the hapless mariners above the loud roar of the waters as the wild waves dashed over them, and their barque parted beneath their feet. A second flash revealed to us the masts falling by the board, and every timber and plank upheaving amid the foam — another came, and not a vestige of the vessel remained. We were about to leave the spot, from feeling how hopeless was the prospect of saving the lives of any of those who had the misfortune to be on board, for we believed that not one could have survived an instant after the vessel had struck, when the men who were with us asserted that they saw some of the wreck drifting towards us; and directly afterwards a chest and some planks were cast within their reach, and hauled on shore.

"This encouraged us to remain; and some other chests and boxes, bales of silk, and parts of the wreck, quickly followed. My brother and I had been endeavouring to pierce the darkness with our eyes, to discover if any of our fellow-creatures were floating among the remnants of their late home, when we perceived a spar driving along the shore, to which it gradually drew near; and as a more vivid flash of lightning than usual darted through the air, we were convinced that we saw the figure of a man clinging to it. Calling the men to our assistance, we hurried on to the spot where we judged he would come on shore. The spar, with its occupant, approached us, again to be carried off. We saw that the man was unable to help himself. My brother and I, fastening ropes round our waists, rushed into the water, and striking out against the waves, almost overpowered with their force, we seized the now nearly insensible body, just as his grasp had loosened from the spar, and dragged him ashore. So completely exhausted was he that, at first, we believed our exertions had been in vain, and that he was dead; but, on feeling his heart, we found that he still breathed; and, after looking in vain for the appearance of any of his late shipmates — though we left some men to watch, should any come on shore — we bore him to the castle. My brother and I were almost chilled to death with the cold wind, which blew through our wet clothes — for we had wrapped up the stranger in our cloaks — yet, on our reaching home, before we would attend to ourselves, we saw him stripped of his wet garments, and placed him between blankets in my bed.

"We then hurried off to change our own dripping clothes, leaving him in charge of our mother, who was engaged in pouring some warm liquid down his throat. When we returned we found that he had much revived, and was able to speak a little, — though with pain — for he confessed that he had received some severe blows from the pieces of the wreck, and was much bruised, and otherwise injured.

“I ought to have stated that, on entering the castle, we found that he was habited in the Greek costume; and that his dress was rich and costly, as were the ornaments on a dagger and brace of pistols which still were fixed in his sash. We were not, therefore, a little astonished to hear him speak Italian with a pure accent, the reason of which he soon explained, by stating that he had been educated in our country, which he had, indeed, only lately left. At first it had struck me that he seemed restless and uneasy when he heard that our men were still out for the purpose of assisting those who might come on shore.

“He made minute and constant inquiries whether any of his shipmates had been saved; and when he was informed that the men had returned, and reported their belief that he was the only survivor of the whole ship’s company, though he at first gave way to expressions of great grief, he very soon recovered his composure, nor did he show further that he felt any regret at their loss.

“As he was very much hurt, I was afraid of fever setting in, which might have proved fatal; and I therefore forbade him to engage in conversation, and gave him such remedies as I thought would prove effectual in allaying it. It did not, however, do so entirely; and for some days he suffered severely.

“I sat by his side, and watched over him with the greatest care — in which work I was aided by my sisters — who were in constant attendance on him when I was called away. When he had slightly recovered, he told us, without our questioning him on the subject, that the vessel which had been lost belonged to the Greek patriot navy, which was just then forming, from those ports which had succeeded in throwing off the Turkish yoke, and that he was simply a junior officer on board, as he had not, indeed, had any great length of experience on the sea — though that, with regard to rank and family, he was equal to any in his native land.

“He then told us that he had been educated at the university of Pisa; and when he mentioned the name of Argiri Caramitzo, my elder brother, who had been there, recollected fully hearing much of him, though it struck him that he bore the character of a wild and thoughtless youth. His ultimate recovery was slow, for the injuries he had received were very severe. As, in our economical system of housekeeping, we had few personal attendants, my mother and sisters were more constantly at the side of the sick stranger’s couch than would otherwise, probably, have been the case; at the same time that it would have been contrary to our notions of hospitality to leave him much to the care of menials. Indeed, his conversation was so sparkling and lively — so full of anecdote of his varied intercourse with the world — and his manners were so courteous — and his expressions were so full of gratitude, that they felt themselves amply recompensed for their attendance by the gratification they experienced in his society — especially my younger sister, to whom the great world he painted was new, and strange, and wonderful.

“My brother and I were not so much captivated by the attractions of the handsome stranger as were the rest of the family; at the same time I confess that, by his cordiality and evident anxiety to win me over, and to show his sense

of the obligation he was under to me for the preservation of his life, he managed to gain my regard, if not my affection — indeed, I could not place that perfect confidence in him which I should have desired; as I frequently, in his less guarded moments, heard him express sentiments which were totally at variance with those he led my family to suppose he possessed. I had, however, no doubt of the account he gave of himself — as it was corroborated in one point by the numbers of bodies washed on shore habited in the Greek costume. To return to the night of the wreck, or rather the morning succeeding it. When he heard that none of his shipmates had escaped, he entreated us to exert ourselves in preserving from plunder such chests and boxes as came on shore, as he said he trusted that, as Providence had saved him, it had preserved his property also, and that he should hope to find his own chest among the rest; and he promised, after having examined them, to give the remainder up to those who had found them. This wish, of course, seemed very natural, and several boxes which were discovered were conveyed to the castle. It was more difficult to account for a number of bales, and pieces of silk and cloth, which drove on shore entangled with the seaweed; but when he heard of it, he stated that they had fallen in just before with a foundering merchantman, and that this was probably some of her cargo.

"His first care on recovering was to examine the chests, which he took an opportunity of doing without any witnesses. One he claimed as his own, and he showed us that it contained several rich Greek dresses, which he begged might be cleaned and dried. The remainder of the boxes had been thoroughly ransacked for the purpose, as I since have reason to know, of destroying any papers which might betray the character of his ship; and also to remove some bags of treasure which he knew they contained. He thus became possessed of considerable wealth, and the surest means of accomplishing any object he might have in view. As he partially recovered his strength, he would wander out with my mother or sisters to the sheltered garden within the walls of the castle, and afterwards to one which was situated on the outer side of the moat, and which contained orange and apple, and other productive trees. The time was approaching when my brother would be compelled to return to his practice, and I to my studies at the university. Before, however, we went, our guest was able to accompany me on a short excursion into the mountains. He seemed to enjoy it, though he was much too fatigued, he said, again to attempt so long an expedition. This observation led me to suppose that he had no present intention of quitting the castle. He expressed his regret at my intended departure, and assured me that he hoped to return again at some future period to thank me more than he had hitherto done for the service I had rendered him. A day or two afterwards, thinking the change would benefit him, I invited him to accompany me on the water; the sea was calm, the sun shone bright, and the air was almost as balmy as in summer. I mention the circumstance for the purpose of introducing the conversation which ensued, as we sat at the stern of the boat rowed by two sturdy fishermen.

"'So, Signor Paolo,' he said, 'I understand that you are studying the science of medicine — a very important one, though but little understood in my country.'

"My answers are immaterial, so I will not repeat them.

"'A somewhat dull life, though, you are destined to lead, if you are to be shut up in one of the smaller cities of Italy, and employed in tending old dowagers and sick babies. I should have thought that such an occupation were somewhat derogatory to one with the noble blood which flows through your veins. Each man to his fancy, Signor Paolo. Now, were I to recommend, I should advise you to claim your patrimony from your father, and to wander forth and see the world. Instead of returning to your college, accompany me to Greece, where I must soon go; and I will show you some of the glorious sport of war, and introduce you to the land where the arts and sciences flourished when Italy was but a desert. When you grow weary you can return to your studies; but I promise you that you will find by far too much excitement and interest in the life you will lead to make you wish to go back to the dull routine from which I shall have emancipated you.'

"Such was the tenor of his conversation; and though I declined accepting his offer, it made an impression which I should not at the time have supposed possible.

"I had for some time past observed that he seemed to pay more attention to my youngest sister, Nina, than to the other members of the family, and she used to listen to his words, and to watch his looks with an eagerness which ought to have warned those about her of the too probable result.

"I, at length, the day before I left home, informed my mother of my fears that the stranger was becoming attached to my sister, and entreated her to be on her guard. She assured me that my alarm was groundless; that she had not remarked anything particular in Signor Caramitzo's manner; and that at all events Nina was far too well brought up to give her affections to one of whom she knew so little. We left our beloved and happy home — my brother, alas! never to return. We were the only two of the family the stranger feared; for he saw that we did not thoroughly trust him.

"Our parents treated him with all the courtesy due to an honoured guest; and it was against all their notions of hospitality to hint to him that as his strength was re-established, he should take his departure. He now began his accursed employment of winning and enslaving the pure affections of my young sister, in order to allure her from her father's home. He found the task of making her love him, not very difficult, for she knew nothing of the perfidy of man; but when he first proposed her flying with him, she was startled and horrified, and would have betrayed him, had he not assured her that he had mentioned the subject merely to try her, and that it was far from his intention to make her do anything of which she might repent.

"He still continued urging his suit in secret, and winding himself deeper and deeper into her affections, till she no longer lived or breathed, except for his

sake. He at last really and truly loved her as much as his nature was capable of; and I believe that if any compunction ever visited his mind, it was at what had been his intention with regard to that sweet girl.

"Two weeks after I left the castle a letter reached me, with the information that the stranger had taken his departure on board a vessel which put into the neighbouring port, and what seriously alarmed me was, that my sister Nina had been seized with a dangerous illness. I would have flown home, but my father forbade me; and the next account spoke of her recovery — though she remained in a low and melancholy state most unusual for her. It was at this time my eldest sister married a nobleman of high character, greatly to our parents' satisfaction; and soon afterwards the first misfortune which had yet happened to our hitherto prosperous family occurred. Our second sister was seized with a mortal malady, which terminated her existence.

"The shock was so great to our mother, worn out as she already was with watching over Nina, that she could not rally; and she herself fell a victim to the same fatal disease.

"I returned home to find my father prostrate by the double blow. For months I anxiously watched over him, and at length, to my great joy, he partially recovered his health and strength. Nina's spirits appeared to me to have been much restored, her eye brightened, and often her lips wore the same smile as of yore. I never ventured to mention the name of Argiri Caramitzo to her, nor did she herself ever allude to the circumstance of his shipwreck and stay at our castle; and I trusted that she had banished him from her mind. Such happiness as the world can give was about, I hoped, to revisit the remnant of our family. Alas! how fallacious were my expectations."

Chapter Twenty Two.

"One summer's evening, my sister and I were seated with our father at an open window of our apartment in the castle, whence we could enjoy a view of the calm waters of the Adriatic. He was more cheerful than he had been for a long time; and Nina took her guitar, and sang to him some of the songs in which he used formerly to delight.

"While we sat there I observed a white sail in the far distance; and it seemed to me to approach nearer and nearer the land. I pointed it out to Nina; and it struck me afterwards that she grew pale as I spoke, and placed her hand on her heart, as if to stop its throbbing. Yet at the time I thought nothing of it. For a few minutes she was silent, and lost in meditation, but at length recovered herself, and continued singing. I remarked this, and I remember rallying her on the subject, saying that her songs were all those she knew of a sad and plaintive character.

The time for sleep arrived, and we retired to our chambers. Nina kissed our father's cheek, and was going, but went back and kissed him again, and he blessed her at parting. I had slept some hours, I know not how long, when I awoke, feeling hot and feverish. I tried again to sleep, but could not; and at length I arose for the purpose of taking a walk round the battlements, thinking that the cool night air, which came off the sea, would calm and refresh me.

"On my way to the small turret gate, which led from a tower to the top of the castle wall, I had to pass Nina's chamber. The door was open. I looked in — the chamber was vacant. Surprised, though not much alarmed, for I thought she had, unknown to me, gone to occupy the one which had been our sister's, I continued my progress.

"As I opened the gate, the night air, which blew in and circled round the bower, struck my feelings as peculiarly cold and damp, and a low, moaning sound came across the waters. There was no moon, and the stars were obscured by a veil of clouds which had gathered in the sky, so that, to my eyes, accustomed to the light of the lamp I had carried thus far, the darkness seemed almost palpable. I, however, could have gone round the walls blindfold, so that this was to me a matter of indifference, and I stepped out on the battlements. I had proceeded some way, when I was startled by seeing the bright rays of a light flashing across the courtyard before me. I stopped, and watched, with astonishment, for I could not surmise who could be in that part of the castle at that hour of the morning. I must state that on the side of the castle nearest the sea, within the outer walls, was a small chapel, dedicated to our Lady of the Rock, and here, on saints' days and Sundays, and on certain other occasions, the priests from a neighbouring convent used to come and perform the services of the Church; for my father did not keep a regular chaplain, as is generally the custom. He was not a man to support the drones they usually are. The light, I

was convinced, whose beams I saw, was in the chapel, through the windows of which it must come. By going on a little further along the battlements, I had a more extensive view of the chapel; and I now beheld a bright light streaming from all the windows. My astonishment was still further increased by hearing the voices of persons within: they were silent, and I then distinguished the voice, I thought, of a priest, engaged in the performance of a service. From a turret, some way on, a stone stair led down into the chapel; and as the key of the door was attached to the one I held in my hand, I determined at once to solve the mystery. Hastening on, I opened the door in the turret, and descended noiselessly. I reached the bottom of the steps, and a few paces more brought me to the door which opened into the chapel.

"I confess that, at that moment, all the stories I had ever heard of the power of the spirits of evil to assume the human form, or of the departed to return on earth, or of horrors mysterious and undefined, rushed into my mind, and, for a time, I stood irresolute and trembling.

"At length, I mustered courage and burst open the door. The scene which met my sight made me recoil with a feeling very different to what I expected.

"A priest was at the altar — a stranger, whom I knew not; and before him stood my young sister Nina, her hand clasped in that of the man whose life I had saved — of whom I had now so many dark suspicions, Argiri Caramitzo. I rushed forward with a cry of rage, and would have borne Nina off from him. He put me aside with a contemptuous smile, for I was unarmed, and far weaker than he. I snatched a dagger from a man standing near, and would have plunged it in his heart, when the voice of the priest arrested my hand, uttering the word, —

"'Forbear!'

"Nina had looked confused and alarmed; she shrieked out, —

"'Oh! injure him not, Paolo, he is my husband — my life; till me, if I have done wrong; but he would have it so.'

"'She speaks truly,' said the priest. 'She is the wedded wife of Signor Argiri Caramitzo, or by whatever name this signor is known.'

"'I can bear much from you, Paolo,' said Caramitzo, speaking to me for the first time; 'but you must not interfere in a case of this sort. Your sweet sister has bestowed on me her hand, as she has long given me her heart; and this very night I bear her hence to my home upon the waves.'

"As he said this, he pressed Nina to his bosom, and seemed about to bear her away, while he stretched out his other hand, as if to prevent my approach. 'Whether wife or not, she leaves not this castle without her father's consent — with one, too, whose name and profession are doubtful,' I again exclaimed, springing forward, and attempting to seize her.

"'If you will have it so, you must take the consequences,' he replied, in the same cool tone. 'Seize that young signor, and bring him along; I will not be interfered with.' He turned, and spoke to a number of men who stood round, armed to the teeth, and whom I had not before remarked. They immediately

seized me, and I saw at once that resistance would be useless.

"'It is folly, Nina, to be alarmed,' I heard the Greek say, in answer to my sister's tears and remonstrances. 'No injury shall be done him, and we will shortly return and claim your father's pardon, and explain the reasons of my present proceedings.'

"Nina was not convinced, for she had not expected to be thus suddenly carried off; and she made every resistance in her power to what was being done, entreating also that I might be set at liberty.

"The Greek, however, was deaf to all her entreaties, and soon succeeded in pacifying her fears. Had I indeed been able to arouse the other inmates of the castle, it would have been of no avail, for it was now completely in the power of Caramitzo, as I have hitherto called him — for under that name I then knew him; though I need scarcely tell you that he was no other than the pirate Zappa. He had, it appeared, during his former stay at our castle, secured the key of a small postern-gate, through which he and his followers had gained admittance. For a long time his arrival had been looked forward to by my deluded sister, as he had arranged the means of communicating with her before his departure; and he had persuaded her of the necessity of a private marriage, all the arrangements of which he promised to make, provided she would undertake to follow his directions. The priest he had brought with him from a distant part of the coast, having induced him, by high bribes, to accompany him, and, I believe, keeping him in ignorance as to the place to which they had come, or who was the lady he had married. A book, however, was left on the altar in the chapel, with the signatures of the married couple, the priest, and witnesses; either intended as a consolation or an insulting mockery to the unhappy father who had been deprived of his child. My eyes were instantly blindfolded, and I felt myself lifted up and carried along for some distance, till I was placed in a boat, from which, after rowing for some distance I was hoisted on board a vessel, and placed by myself in a cabin, the door of which was fastened on me. After a vain attempt to get out, I threw myself down on a couch in the cabin, and considered how I should proceed to liberate my poor sister and myself. The rippling noise of the water against the sides of the vessel showed me that she was under weigh, and I felt how hopeless was our fate. The morning must have been far advanced when the door of the cabin was opened by two powerful men, with arms in their belts. A third person appeared behind them, who spoke a little broken Italian.

"'We have come,' he said, 'Signor Paolo, to request you to take the oath; without signing which no person is allowed to remain alive on board this vessel beyond twelve hours. When you have been longer with us you will see the necessity of our rule. You will not refuse to take it.'

"'I shall certainly refuse to take any oath which may restrain my liberty,' I answered; 'I desire that my sister and myself be at once restored to our home.'

"'Whatever we may ultimately do, it is necessary for you to take the oath before you can quit the cabin. It is the rule of the ship, and the captain himself,

as well as any of his friends must abide by it.'

"'What is the character of the ship I am on board, then?' I asked — the dreadful truth for the first time flashing across my mind.

"'That you will be told when you have taken the oath,' replied the interpreter. 'The captain has brought you on board, and will not have you injured; but we claim our privilege, which he cannot refuse us. The oath to betray neither vessel nor crew, by sign, by word, or deed; to obey our chief in all things, and to abide by the laws of the ship, or,' — and the two men drew out their glittering daggers from their sashes — 'death. You preserved our captain's life, he says; but he cannot save yours, unless you accept our terms, and then, on that account, we will gladly receive you as a brother.'

"I considered, as well as I was able, under the circumstances, how I should act. I was young — life seemed full of charms. They were in earnest, and I saw nothing unreasonable in the oath they imposed on me. I had no longer any doubt that I was on board a piratical vessel. I could not expect her crew to act otherwise than they were doing towards me; and the true character of Caramitzo now appearing more evident, I felt that there was greater reason to rescue my betrayed sister from his power; and I thought that the only way of so doing would be to affect no hesitation even in joining them.

"'I consent to take the oath,' I replied, with as firm a voice as I could command. Had I known the abject slavery to which those words would reduce me, I would have died sooner than utter them.

"'Come,' said the men, 'we are prepared to administer it without delay,' and, blindfolding me, they led me into another cabin, where I was ordered to kneel down on a cushion, and a book was placed in my hands, which I was told was the Bible. The oath was then administered, and it made me call down the most dreadful maledictions on my head, and on the heads of all those dear to me, should I ever break it. The bandage was then removed from my eyes, and I found myself in a large cabin, surrounded by men with drawn swords in their hands, and at the head of them appeared the pirate Zappa.

"A cross was then formed by the swords of the two men standing nearest to me, which I was compelled to kiss, and then to sign my name in a book with my own blood. The ceremony completed, I was told to rise, a sword was placed in my hands, and I was hailed as a comrade. I shuddered at the name. Zappa then advanced towards me, and, with the same smile which had once fascinated me, he exclaimed. 'Welcome, my dear Paolo, now doubly my brother. I have been compelled to use a little gentle force to win you to me as I have long been anxious to do. You are yet unable to appreciate the advantages I can offer you, so I will not complain of your angry looks. Now come on deck, and I will introduce you to your brother officers — for I consider you one of this ship, and I will try and make a seaman of you.'

"I was meditating, while he spoke, whether I should fly at him, and endeavour to wreak the bitter vengeance I felt at the moment; but the oath I had just uttered came to my mind, and for my sister's sake, by a violent effort, I

restrained my passion.

"'I cannot pretend, Signor Caramitzo, not to complain of the violence to which you have subjected me, and of the deceit you have practised on my sister,' I replied; 'yet, I am in your power, and I trust to your honour to make the best amends you can — to treat her with tenderness, since she has given herself to you — and to allow me the opportunity of communicating with our unhappy father, and of endeavouring to mitigate the grief he will feel at the loss of his children.'

"'I do not forget that you saved my life, Paolo, and that alone would make me obey your wishes,' he answered, in a mild, conciliating tone. 'Your sister is dearer far than that life, and, therefore, you need not fear for her. I will not pretend to disguise from you, Paolo, what I am; but that she need not know. The world calls me and my companions pirates. — Let them — the lion is a nobler animal than the beast on which it preys. Ours is a glorious life; you will learn to think so, too. There is danger, it is true. But there is excitement far higher than that the gambler, who stakes his fortune on a cast, can enjoy, and who generally, when he loses, seeks the worst that can befall us — a speedy death. But I will not now stay to sing the praises of the life I have destined you to lead, till, grown weary, we some day retire from the busy scene, and become honoured chiefs and nobles in our own country, with lands and wealth, and surrounded by our family and dependents. Eh, Paolo, I draw the picture well! But we will on deck, and see how our barque speeds over the waters.'

"I repeat his words, to show the character of the man in whose power my unhappy sister was placed. For myself I feared not, nor grieved — I could easily break my bonds; but she, alas! hers were indissoluble. Fortunately for her, she did not guess who he was, nor the character of his ship. She believed, and I trust, to this day believes, that he commanded a Greek man-of-war, and is all he represented himself to her.

"We sailed on, meeting with various adventures, till we reached this island, where, in a neighbouring tower, he at once established my sister. I felt also that it would be cruelty to undeceive her, and would answer no good object. My sister, I believe, he really loves, or did love, as far as his nature would allow; but lately I have fancied his affection was decaying, and he has always treated me without severity, and generally with kindness, though my spirit has rebelled against the shackles which galled me, but which I had no power to shake off.

"My story is drawing to an end; but I have still more to say. I urged Zappa, day after day, to allow me to return to my paternal home, and endeavour to comfort my father, if consolation was still to be found for him on earth, and to explain to him the cause of my sister's absence, with the wish of palliating the folly of her conduct in his eyes, vowing solemnly at the end of four months again to return to the island. To my surprise, he at last consented to comply with my wish, undertaking to land me on the coast of Italy, and to call again for me at a spot and a period he would afterwards fix on. His object in so doing was, not to allow me to know the position of this island. He fulfilled his promise, and

I at length returned to the castle. Alas! though my father still lived, I saw at once by the pallor on his cheek, and trembling voice, that his days were numbered. I appeared to him like one returning from the dead; for he had believed that I was slain in endeavouring to prevent my sister from being carried off. He blamed her not — he pardoned her weakness and folly, and his longing desire was to see her once more before he died.

"I had yet another blow to receive. My eldest brother, whom I loved dearly, had been slain by the dagger of an assassin at Naples, and I became the heir to the family property, which I neither wished for nor could enjoy. My whole anxiety was now to return to the island, and to endeavour to persuade the pirate to allow my sister to accompany me back to see our father ere he died.

"At last I received a letter desiring me to repair to a certain port, where I was to be met by a person who would convey me on board a felucca, whence I was to be transferred to the pirate vessel. I thought not of the dangers and difficulties of the undertaking, but, embracing my father, with a bleeding heart I tore myself from him, and hastened to the appointment. Zappa received me cordially, and I was in hopes, would consent to my request; but when I at length made it, he at once positively refused to grant it.

"He said that Nina was now happy and contented; and that she knew not of her father's illness; and that if she was allowed to leave him she would hear things to his prejudice, and might refuse to return; and that, as she was only going to see her father die, it could not possibly benefit her. The more I urged my request, the more he appeared determined to refuse it, till at length I saw that all attempts to gain him to consent would be worse than futile, so I ceased from importuning him. I did not the less meditate how I could best accomplish my object.

"As soon as I reached the island, I told Nina, the first time I was alone with her, of our father's wish to see her, at the same time binding her not to mention the subject to her husband, as I assured her he would not consent to part from her. As soon as I explained our father's state to her, and told her he was heartbroken at her loss, she wept bitterly, and promised to enter into any plan I might arrange to enable her to visit him, fully intending again to return here. My purpose was, to separate her from the pirate for ever, by informing her, though at the risk, I knew, of blasting her happiness, of his true character; but yet, signora, I knew that the evil day must come, and that, when he deserted her, I might not be by to protect her.

"I had brought a considerable sum of money with me, which I had concealed about my person for any emergency, and with it I bribed two men of the village on the opposite side of the bay, to prepare a boat, in which, with their aid, I hoped to reach either the main land, or one of the larger islands, or to get on board some vessel which would convey us to some civilised place, whence I might find the means of reaching Italy. I waited for an occasion when Zappa should have gone on one of the piratical expeditions he was in the habit of taking, and when, according to custom, he would have compelled me to

accompany him. To avoid this I had planned to feign illness, and, as soon as I saw the preparations making for embarking, I pretended to be seized with a dangerous sickness. He expressed great regret, and so convinced me that he regarded me with affection, that I felt some qualms of conscience at deceiving him, stained, though I knew him to be, with a thousand crimes. He even delayed his departure, and I saw it would be necessary to pretend to recover to get him off.

"The night at last came, in which the enterprise was to be attempted. I left my room, to which I was supposed to be confined by illness, and, going down to the bay, I found the boat and the men in readiness. I then returned to my sister's tower, whence I bore her trembling with alarm, and overwhelmed with grief at the thoughts of quitting the man whom she so fatally loved, we safely reached the boat. We were not observed, for no one suspected us, and we launched forth into the deep. I had arranged for an ample supply of provisions, and I had previously carried down the means of sheltering my sister from the weather; so we were prepared for a long voyage. For three days we steered to the west and south, with the sea calm, and the wind favourable and moderate, passing only small islands, where the men assured me we should have no chance of assistance. By this calculation, it would take us two days more before we could reach the main land; when, on the fourth day, as the morning broke, I discerned a vessel standing towards us. As she drew nearer, my horror, as well as that of the islanders, may be supposed, when they pronounced her to be Zappa's own brig, the Sea Hawk. It was hopeless to expect to escape her by outstripping her in sailing; so, we lowered the sail on the chance of our remaining unobserved, while Nina and I crouched down in the bottom of the boat, in order that, if the pirate vessel should pass at some little distance, we might be mistaken for one of the fishing-boats of the neighbouring islands. All our care was futile. On so smooth a sea, and in so bright an atmosphere, an object as large as we presented might be seen at a great distance, and we had not escaped the vigilant eyes of the pirates. On came the vessel. Nina was bathed in tears; the Greeks trembled, for they knew their lives were at stake. I nerved myself for the worst, for I knew not what the rage of Zappa might prompt him to do, though I feared for my sister more than for myself.

"The boat was not only seen but recognised, and the Sea Hawk ran up close to us. The men were ordered to pull alongside, and we all soon stood on the deck of the brig.

"'Such, then, is the love you bear me, that the first moment of my absence you would desert me,' said the pirate, looking reproachfully at Nina, without taking any notice of me and my companions. 'I believed, I felt sure, that you loved me, but now I know that I was bitterly mocked.'

"'Oh, no, no!' exclaimed Nina, who had stood trembling and abashed before him, 'I loved you better than life itself. I love you now, and no human power should have prevented me from returning to you. Do with me as you will, but do not wring my heart with greater anguish than now it suffers by believing that I

do not love you. My duty to a dying parent would alone have prompted me to take the step I have done.'

"'I believe you, Nina,' said Zappa, taking her in his arms. 'I will not part with you. As to you, Paolo, you have deceived me, and have instigated your sister to leave me. I shall take means to prevent your behaving thus in future.'

"Saying this, he carried my sister below, and placed her in his cabin; he then returned on deck, and walked up to where the two Greeks were standing, awaiting their sentence. I had never before seen his fiercer passions aroused.

"'You know what you have to expect,' he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder. 'You have broken the laws of our community. You would have deprived me of the two persons I most regard in the world, and purposed — nay, deny it not — for I know your vile natures, to have murdered them for the sake of the gold still in their possession. Take, therefore, the consequences.'

"As he uttered these words he drew two pistols from his belt, one in each hand, and, levelling them at the heads of the men, they uttered a shriek for mercy, as their eyes caught the direction of his hands; but it was too late. Ere they could spring back, he fired, and they fell dead at his feet.

"'Cast the bodies overboard, and let their boat go adrift. We will keep no memorial of the wretches,' he exclaimed; then, turning to me, he observed, 'You see, Paolo, how we treat traitors; and let me tell you, you have had a narrow escape; and your sweet sister — I tremble to think what her fate would have been. Had I not fortunately found you, you would not have been allowed to live another day, and let this be a lesson to you for the future.'

"Two days afterwards we reached the island, and Zappa quieted my sister's anxiety, by promising to gain information respecting our father's health. He did so, and the reply was, that he was dead. I remained still subservient to the pirate. I would not desert my unhappy sister, and I could not break through the fetters the pirate had thrown around me. He confides in me, and insists on my accompanying him on his expeditions, when I can render great assistance to his men from my knowledge of surgery; and I am at times able to mitigate the fate of those who fall into his power. Had I the will also, my oath would prevent my betraying him, and thus, signora, you will be able to account for my appearance on board the speronara, and afterwards in the Sea Hawk. Such, lady, is the outline of my unhappy history — "

"And one on which it would have been wiser for you to have held silence!" exclaimed a voice behind him; and, looking up, he and Ada beheld the tall form of Zappa standing in the doorway. He advanced into the room, making a low reverence towards her, at the same time that he stretched out his hand in the direction Paolo was standing. "Go, foolish youth!" he exclaimed, in a tone in which contempt blended with anger. "You will some day try my patience more than I can bear."

The young Italian stood for an instant irresolute — his bosom heaving with emotions of pride and indignation, and his lips parted, as if he would have defied his tyrant; he felt, too, that he was in the presence of the woman for

whom he had declared his love, and all the more manly qualities of his nature rose up to his aid; but he had been too long accustomed to yield to the influence which the pirate had gained over him — he quailed before the stern, unrelenting eye fixed on him, and his soft, unresisting character, too similar to that of his unfortunate sister, made him falter in his half-formed purpose. With an expression of agony, of shame, and humiliation on his countenance, he turned and fled down the steps.

Ada at once felt the importance of maintaining her own dignity. She rose, and as calmly as she could command her voice, she asked, — "May I know, signor, to what cause I am indebted for this visit?"

"Beautiful lady!" said the pirate, still standing at a distance, which would have showed respect had his words been different, "can you suppose it possible that I should always resist the influence of your attractions. Am I to be the only one in this island who is to be debarred the happiness of basking in your smiles? Is yon weak youth ever to be preferred to me?"

"In pity's name, cease this insulting mockery, signor," said Ada, her heart at the same time sinking with a fear she had hitherto happily not yet experienced. "Does not every manly quality of your heart rebel at the thought of thus addressing one so totally unprotected, so helpless as I am. With regard to the unhappy gentleman who has just quitted the room, I am innocent of any other feeling than profound pity for his misfortunes; and with regard to yourself, how can you expect me to feel other than indignation at the outrage to which you have subjected me. Every day that I am kept here a prisoner can but serve to increase that feeling; and my only request is, that I may not be insulted by the presence of one who has been the cause of the misery I endure."

There is a majesty and dignity, a commanding power in the eye and expression of a pure, high-minded, resolute woman, which will abash even the boldest and most unscrupulous men. That is their shield and buckler, their defence against the attacks of the profligate. It is like the steadfast gaze of a dauntless man, which is said to have the power of awing even the fiercest of the beasts of the forest; but let her beware how for an instant she withdraws it, how she allows the softer feelings of her woman's nature to shake her firmness; her opponent is ever watchful, and should she allow the faintest gleam of hope to enter his bosom, the potent charm is broken. Thus, in the bright dignity of her nature, stood Ada Garden.

The blood-stained, reckless pirate advanced not a step nearer; he stood abashed and confused, nor gave utterance to a word of remonstrance at her resolution. He seemed to feel that it was she, indeed, whose right it was to command — his duty to obey. He hesitated as he spoke.

"Pardon me, signora, I came not to offend you, but to endeavour to win your regard and esteem. Time may reconcile you to your lot — may soften your feelings — may create a tenderer sentiment in your heart than you are now disposed to entertain. I am not one who is in the habit of yielding a point on which I have once determined; I must be content, however, to look forward to

the future, while I submit to your dictates for the present. Farewell, signora, I acknowledge myself conquered; but another time, be not too confident that you will gain the victory."

Ada endeavoured to maintain her composure, but the tone assumed by Zappa alarmed her more than he was probably aware of. Silence she felt was now her best safeguard. She placed her hands before her eyes to shut out his hateful sight, while she endeavoured to nerve herself for what might next occur.

The Greek, however, it appeared, had no wish to proceed to extremities. Perhaps he really felt affection for her; perhaps he calculated on receiving a handsome ransom for her. Whatever was his motive, he determined to persecute her no more for the present, and he took the opportunity to quit the chamber.

When she removed her hands from her eyes she was alone. She heard the pirate descending the steps of the tower, and when she had ascertained that he had to a certainty left it, she knelt down, and her deep sobs told of her outraged feelings, and the anguish of her heart. She was aroused by the return of Marianna, who promised never again to be tempted to leave her.

Chapter Twenty Three.

Zappa had hitherto contrived to prevent the meeting of Ada and Nina, by compelling both of them to remain shut up in their respective parts of the castle. The cause of this conduct it is scarcely necessary to explain. His object was to keep Nina ignorant of the presence of her rival, and he also hoped to bend Ada's haughty spirit by the confinement to which she was subject. It could not, however, be supposed that Nina should not hear rumours of the presence of a stranger in the island, although Paolo had been careful not to hurt his sister's feelings needlessly, by speaking of her. Little Mila, the only personal attendant with whom she could converse, had been warned not to mention the arrival of Ada and her attendant; and for some time she kept the secret which was burning on her tongue; but as she suffered somewhat from that infirmity which is said, I suspect unjustly, to be peculiar to her sex, she at last began to think that she had kept it long enough. She did not, however, at once announce the information she had to communicate, but reserved to herself the pleasure of giving it out by driblets.

"We shall have the whole castle built up as it used to be, one of these days, I suspect, signora," she observed, as she was assisting Nina to dress. "It would be difficult, though, to arrange a more handsome room than this."

"No, Mila, scarcely could anything be more beautiful than this. But why should you say so?" asked Nina, whose suspicions had already been aroused by her attendant's previous remarks.

"Why, signora, I was comparing it with a room I have seen elsewhere, which is also very magnificent," returned Mila.

"You have seen! Why, you have never been off this island," exclaimed Nina.

"That is true, signora," said the Greek girl; "but the room I speak of is on the island, and I confess it is at no great distance from this tower."

"I was not aware that any other part of the castle was inhabited, except the tower and the house close to it," observed Nina.

"There you are mistaken, signora. The other old tower to the east of this, has had a room lately fitted up, very much like this, and there lives there a good-natured, lively girl, who tells me — for we manage to talk very well together — that she was born in an island like this, only larger. I like her very much, though she is not at all pretty; but she has a mistress, a young lady, who also lives in the tower, who is a complete angel — so fair, and kind, and beautiful, though she does not speak much, as she does not understand a word of Romaic; but I loved her the moment I saw her, and I am sure you would do so also, signora, were you to see her."

"A lady! young, and fair, and beautiful," repeated the Italian girl, a feeling gushing into her bosom which was very far from being allied to love. "Who is she? how long has she been here? what is she like?"

“As to who she is, signora, all I know is, that they say she belongs to a people who have big ships, and have never been slaves to the Turks; then she has been here ever since our chief came back; for he brought her in his vessel with Signor Paolo, your brother, who knows more about her than I do; and I suspect, loves her also not a little. And with regard to what she is like — she is not so tall as you are, signora; but her skin is as clear as yours, and fair as the foam blown across the ocean in a winter’s storm, with some of the hue stolen from the rose on her cheeks; and her eyes — so soft they are, and of the same tint as the brightest spot in the cloudless sky above our heads.”

How long little Mila, having now ventured once to let her tongue run loose on the forbidden subject, would have continued recapitulating the praises of the stranger lady — little dreaming of the wounds she was inflicting on the feelings of her older friend and mistress — it is impossible to say, had not Nina interrupted her.

“I must go and see this stranger lady!” she exclaimed, in a tone which startled the little girl, and taught her that it would have been wiser to have obeyed orders, and not mentioned her. “Come, Mila, we will go at once, and you shall run up into her room, and announce me.”

“Oh, dear! signora, that will never do,” answered the Greek girl. “You forget that the directions of our chief forbid you to quit your tower; and what would he say, were he to hear that you had visited that of the stranger lady. He is certain to come back, and find you there.”

Nina had, however, so determined to satisfy her jealous suspicions, that she overruled all Mila’s scruples.

“If I find them fatally true, a speedy death will be my only resource, or, ah! that of my rival;” so ran the current of her thoughts. “I could not let her live in the triumphant enjoyment of what I had lost — his love. I could not bear to think that other ears but mine own hear the tender accents of his voice, which speaks so eloquently to me of love. ’Twould be madness to know that I were flung aside for one more young and beautiful, perchance, but one who could not feel for him one tenth part of the intense love I bear him. I must go and see her. If she is — oh! God, what?” And her hand touched, unconsciously, the hilt of a small dagger she wore in her girdle.

Ada Garden was sitting in her chamber when little Mila hurried into her presence, and intimated, as well as she could, that a lady desired to see her, flying out at the same speed with which she entered.

As it happened, Ada did not, in the least, understand what she meant, and supposing it was a matter of no importance, continued the perusal of a work she held in her hand. She was startled by hearing a deep sigh, and looking up, she saw a graceful female figure standing at the other end of the room, with her eyes fixed intently on her. For the first moment, the idea glanced across her mind, that her senses must have deceived her, so statue-like was the form — so rigid was the gaze; but a few seconds served to assure her that a human being was in her presence. Her own look, as she lifted up her eyes, betokened surprise,

though not alarm, and there was that sweet and tranquil expression, that purity, the consciousness of innocence, in her countenance, which the beautiful Italian — for she was the intruder — interpreted aright. Nina did not utter a word for some moments; but with the passionate impulse which had, unhappily, too often guided her, she advanced towards her supposed rival, and knelt down before her, bending her head to the ground. She soon looked up, and gazed in her countenance with an expression of earnest inquiry, as if she would read her thoughts.

"Lady," she at length exclaimed, "I have wronged you — I feel — I know — you cannot be the base, the cruel being I have believed you. You would not seek to estrange the affections of a husband from one who lives for him alone. Say you do not love Argiri Caramitzo, the chief of this island — you do not wish to win his love."

Astonishment prevented Ada from answering this extraordinary address, and she hesitated, while she considered in what terms she should speak, so that she might quickly tranquillise the agitated feelings of her visitor, and, at the same time, avoid wounding them.

Nina seemed to mistake her silence for an acknowledgment of guilt, for she sprang to her feet, and her dagger-blade flashed in her hand. In another moment, it would have been stained with blood, had not Ada exclaimed, —

"Indeed you do me wrong, signora. I would not rob you of your husband's love, for all the world can give. I am not mistaken in supposing you to be the sister of Signor Paolo Montifalcone; and if so, I already know your history, and, far from seeking to injure you, would do all in my power to preserve you from harm."

"You can but injure me in one way, and that you might do unknowingly and unwillingly," exclaimed the Italian, still regarding her with a glance of distrust; while she clutched the weapon in her right hand, which hung down by her side, the other being stretched out before her, as if to prevent her supposed rival from approaching her.

Ada felt an unusual courage come to her aid. She neither trembled nor turned pale, nor did she show any attempt to defend herself from Nina's mistaken vengeance; but she lifted her mild blue eyes, full of commiseration, towards the now flashing orbs of the Italian, and, in a sweet, calm voice, she said, —

"There is a Power above, which, if we seek, will arm us both — you against such vain fears, me against the guilt, unknowing though it may be, of winning affections which should be your alone."

A fresh impulse seized the unhappy Nina; flinging away her weapon, she rushed forward, and throwing herself on her knees, clasped Ada's hand and covered it with kisses.

"I have not the heart to injure you, though you should prove my destruction," she exclaimed. "But you will not allow him to pour the words of tender endearment into those ears; nay, if he does but think or utter one word

of love, remember, the time has come to act for your own safety. Here, take this weapon, and promise me to employ it, should the necessity arrive, for should you fail to do so, neither your beauty, nor his shielding arm could save you from the maddened impulse of my hand — the last dying effort of my strength."

As she spoke, she rose, and lifting her dagger from the ground, she returned with it towards Ada.

"Nay, fear not, lady," she said, as she saw Ada start. "It is harmless now. Take the dagger, and keep it as remembrance of the unhappy Nina Montifalcone."

Nina presented the weapon, as she said this, with the hilt towards Ada, who considered it would be more politic to accept the gift, though, indeed, she shuddered as she did so; but she felt that she might herself unhappily be driven to the dire necessity of employing it. She took it, therefore, and placed it on the table by her. She then raised the excited and unhappy girl, who had again sunk on her knees, and placed her on a seat by her side, when, after some time, she succeeded, by slow degrees, in completely tranquillising and re-assuring her mind.

"You are no stranger to me, Nina," said Ada Garden, affectionately holding her hand. "Your brother has told me the whole of your history, and his own unhappy fate. His devotion to you seems unparalleled. Do you feel that you give it a just return?"

"Alas! no," answered Nina. "He has, I fear, sacrificed himself to me from that dreadful night when I left my native home, confused, bewildered, and little dreaming that it was to be for ever. But I do not detain him; if he wishes to return he may do so."

"He came with you, and without you he will not go back," observed Ada.

"While my father lived, I would have returned to see him, at the risk of my life — at the risk of the displeasure of one dearer than life; but now that he is no more, no earthly power should make me quit my husband."

"But your brother has doubts of the truth of the report of your father's death, and would still induce you to accompany him," said Ada.

"What! and allow you to remain?" whispered Nina, her fears, in a moment, rushing back to the baneful course from which they had been diverted. "No, lady, that were folly too great even for me to commit."

Ada saw that she was touching on dangerous ground.

"Indeed, again you wrong me, Nina," she said, tenderly pressing her hand. "I did not believe my intentions could be so misconstrued; but I will not mention a subject which is so painful to you."

"There are few which are not, lady," returned Nina, again appeased; "for the very language we speak reminds me of the home I have lost, the misery I have caused — it reminds me that I may be stigmatised as a murderess; that the death of the best, the kindest of fathers, may be laid to my charge; and often would such thoughts drive me to madness, and to seek a speedy end to all my misery from the summit of yonder cliff; but for what I have lost, I have gained a

prize which recompenses me for all — the love of one without which death would have been welcome; a love I value more than all the earth's brightest treasure. They say the maidens in your country are calm and cold as the snow on the Appenines, and it were in vain, therefore, for you, lady, to attempt to conceive what that love is. He might abandon me — he might forget me — he might spurn me, but still I should love him, though I slew him for his perfidy; and should die happily on the tomb to which I had consigned him. Then do not speak to me again of quitting him; — he is my world, and all else I have abandoned for him."

Ada, after this, did not again attempt to renew the subject — indeed, pirate though he was, Zappa, she remembered, was, there existed every reason to believe, the young Italian's husband; and though utterly unworthy of her devoted affection, as she had herself too strong a proof to doubt, Nina still owed to him the duty of a wife. She had severed other sacred ties, in a way they can never be severed without ultimately bringing grief and remorse to the heart of the guilty one; but she now must abide by the consequences of her fault, and had no power to quit him to whom she had bound herself, even to visit the deathbed of a father. It was painful, however, to Ada, to reflect what must be the ultimate fate of her lovely and interesting companion, when the pirate's already waning love was burnt out — when the cast on which she had staked her all on earth was lost for ever; or, should the lawless adventurer meet the fate his daring expeditions seemed to court, and when death should claim his own, she should learn that he whom she had so truly loved was a murderer, and a robber, and had died the death of a malefactor, what anguish, what shame, was in store for her — what a dreary future.

The two girls, both equally beautiful in their separate styles, sat together, without speaking, for some time, lost in their own reflections. Both were sad — for one was a prisoner, without a prospect of release: to the mind of the other, a picture of the home of her youth, and her deserted, dying father, had been conjured up with the vividness with which they had never before presented themselves, and some pangs of remorse were agitating her mind. They were startled by a loud peal of thunder, which reverberated through the sky, and looking out through the casement they beheld the whole air of heaven covered with dark rolling clouds, and the sea a mass of white foam, which a blast, like a whirlwind, blew furiously over the surface; while the sullen roar of the lately aroused waves was heard as they lashed the rocks beneath the cliffs. One of those sudden tempests had arisen, which at times visit the shores of the Mediterranean with peculiar fury; their anger, like the rage of a human being, though short, yet causing havoc and destruction wherever it falls. The wind, as it increased, howled and whistled through the ruined building; the lightning darted, with vivid flashes, from the lowering sky; and the waves, worked into fury, rose every instant higher and higher, till they appeared like the water of a boiling cauldron, as their white-headed crests leaped up towards the tower, which they seemed to shake to the very base.

Marianna, followed by little Mila, rushed into the room, shrieking with alarm; crying out that the building was going to fall about their heads; at the same time, the rain descended so furiously, that they were afraid to venture into the open air.

"Oh! signora, we are all going to be washed into the sea, and we shall never more be heard of; oh! Santa Maria, have mercy on us," cried the Maltese, rushing up to Ada, and crouching down by her side.

The Greek girl was not so much alarmed, as she had witnessed similar tempests before, and knew how speedily they terminated; so also had Nina, who gazed at it devoid of all fear; and whose agitated state of mind it seemed rather to allay than increase.

"Do not be alarmed, lady," she said, smiling, as she turned to Ada. "You may also quiet the fears of your attendant, for the masonry with which we are surrounded has already stood firm for several hundred years through many a fiercer storm than this; and the shocks we now feel are not likely to shatter these old towers. They are caused by the waves dashing under the caverned rocks beneath our feet. How furiously the waters rage and foam at the opposition this little island makes against them. It was during a storm like this that Argiri Caramitzo was first brought to my father's castle. Heaven grant that he may not have been tempted out on the sea this morning. Mila, do you know if your chief left the harbour since I came here?"

The latter sentence she spoke in her broken Romaic, and in a tone which showed her agitation.

"Yes, lady," answered the Greek girl, "He went on board one of the misticos as soon as he reached the harbour, and immediately set sail."

"Great heaven, and is even now on yon troubled waters," exclaimed the poor girl almost fainting with agitation. "And I am here, nor even till this instant thought of him. Cannot we send out the other mistico to assist him. Surely some of his brave followers will be found ready to search for him. I myself will accompany them."

"Alas, signora, it would be in vain now to attempt to put to to sea," replied Mila, who knew more about nautical affairs than did Nina. "Yet we need not fear for the safety of our chief — he is even now probably taking shelter under some of the neighbouring islands. He and those who are with him are too well accustomed to the signs of the weather not to have perceived this storm in time to have escaped from its fury."

"Ah, I think I see a white sail flying before the wind, like a sea-bird's wing on the summit of the waves," exclaimed Marianna, who had been looking through the telescope at the object of which she spoke.

"Oh, it must be the mistico, then," cried Nina joyfully, hastening to the telescope, through which she saw the white canvas, closely reefed, of a small vessel standing for the island.

"Oh, it is the mistico," she exclaimed eagerly. "I know her by the shape of her sails. It must be her, and they are returning in safety."

As soon as Nina had withdrawn her eye from the glass, which she did not do for a long time, till she had fully persuaded herself that the vessel in sight was the one she hoped, with her husband on board, Ada's curiosity and interest were excited to watch the progress of the mistico. On she came, careering across the foaming sea, now lifted on the summit of a curling wave, now sunk into the deep trough between the watery mountains, where she would remain, her sail alone visible, apparently about to be overwhelmed by the wave which lifted its crested head close astern of her; but again she would rise once more on the summit of another, and as it were seated on it would fly onwards for a long distance, again to plunge down to the dangerous depths from which she had just emerged. To Ada the little vessel appeared in the most imminent danger, and she expected every instant to see it disappear beneath the waves, and wondered how she could have so long continued to buffet them successfully. As she watched, she observed that the mistico, instead of steering towards the west end of the island, so as to fetch the mouth of the bay, was gradually verging towards the east; and it struck her also that she was smaller than the mistico she had been accustomed to see from the stern windows of the brig, while she was living on board. But of that, of course, she was not able to form any correct judgment, as from so great a height and distance the eye even of the most experienced is easily deceived. She feared therefore that the sail in sight was a stranger, and would, to a certainty, be wrecked on the coast, without the chance of receiving any aid from the inhabitants, who were much more likely to murder any of the unfortunate crew who might escape the perils of shipwreck, for the sake of their clothes, and any money they might have about them, than to assist in preserving their lives.

Nina also had been watching, with still more intense interest, the progress of the sail, now seen without the aid of the glass; but so persuaded was she that it was her husband's mistico, that she did not remark the difference of size, nor that she was not steering directly for the harbour.

"Ah, he will be here soon, and in spite of the storm I must return to my tower, to receive him when he comes on shore," she exclaimed in a cheerful voice. "Lady I must bid you farewell, and as I cannot now tell you all the love and gratitude I feel for you, I must entreat you to allow me to visit you again. You will forget my passion and folly, and remember only any redeeming traits you may have discovered in me. Say you will do this, my sweet friend, before I leave you."

"Indeed I will," answered Ada, pressing both the hands which were held out to her. "I shall think of you always with the affection of a sister; but I must not let you go even now; for I fear greatly you will be disappointed in your expectations. See, yonder bark; mark how her head is turned; and tell me if she is steering for the harbour."

"Alas! that is not our chief's mistico, after all," exclaimed little Mila, corroborating the opinion Ada had formed. "She will be wrecked, too, and all in her will, to a certainty, perish."

"I cannot think that it is not his," said Nina. "He has some reason for approaching the further end of the island, if, indeed, he is not about to enter the harbour — perhaps he may purpose going round it to anchor on the northern side."

"That vessel, as she now steers, would not get round the island, lady," observed the Greek girl. "I wish my grandfather were here — and he would understand clearly all about it. Ah, there he is; and now the rain is over I may venture out and call him up here. He will explain matters clearly to us."

Saying this, without a thought of the consequences either to herself or to her, should the morose old pirate think fit to inform his chief of Nina's visit to the stranger lady, out ran the lively girl into the open air.

She was almost blown away down the ravine by a furious gust of wind, which caught her just as she got outside the door; but, undaunted, she managed to work on her way, shouting loudly all the time to her grandfather to come to her assistance; but as he was to windward, and rather deaf, he did not hear her.

At last she reached him, and seized him by the arm to support herself, after her fatiguing run, while she insisted on his accompanying her back to the apartment of the stranger lady.

He looked very angry at first at being asked to go; but little Mila's eloquence conquered, and she led him in triumph back, holding on by his arm; but this time it was to prevent herself from being fairly lifted off her feet, and blown along over the ground.

He made a somewhat unwilling salute to the two ladies, as he entered the room, while Mila dragged him up to the window.

"Now tell these ladies what you think about that mistico there, which is driving towards the shore — let me see, where is she? Alas! she has come frightfully near."

"That mistico, why she must be a stranger to these parts, or she would not venture near our shore; and she has a crew on board who know very little about their calling, for they are going to wreck themselves as clearly as possible, somewhere at the east end of the island. They could not do it better if they were to try; and as there are only two places on the whole coast where they have a chance of escaping, probably in a few minutes they will have gone to the other world."

"Then you think that she is not my husband's mistico," said Nina.

"Think! why no, of course not; she is not unlike her either, lady," answered the old pirate. "They are strangers, who, as they are not invited to come here, will probably have their throats cut for their intrusion, if, by chance, they happen to get in shore alive."

"But your chief — what think you of your chief?" exclaimed Nina eagerly.

"He is safe enough under shelter of one of the islands, and will be back here right enough to-morrow morning," answered the old man.

"Grant heaven it may be so," ejaculated Nina. "And now, Vlacco, you must

obey me in this. Collect all the men you can, and hasten along the shore, to where that vessel will be wrecked. Remember, the life of your chief was preserved in a similar manner, and it were impious to allow any to perish whom we can save. Bring such as escape safe to my tower; and beware that no one robs or injures them."

The old man, who had found that he had been very much too severe to Nina during the last absence of Zappa, was glad of an opportunity of regaining her favour, and accordingly promised to obey her directions.

In spite of the violence of the storm, he immediately set out to collect some more youthful and active men to attend him; and he was soon again seen crossing the causeway in the direction of the place towards which the vessel was driving.

As it was scarcely possible for Nina to reach her own tower, she continued, with Ada Garden, watching the awful progress of the mistico.

On came the little vessel, scarcely visible, amid the foam and spray which surrounded her.

She had now got completely to the east side of the tower, whereas, when first seen at the greatest distance, she was in the south-west. Her course must, therefore, have been about northeast, as nearly as possible, directly before the wind; and whatever old Vlacco might have said to the contrary, she must have been steered by no timid or ignorant hands.

"She may even now get round the east end of the island!" exclaimed Nina, whose eye had seldom been off her. "If she can once do that, the unhappy men on board her may yet escape with their lives."

"But suppose she does not, will not the old Greek and his followers be able to rescue them?" asked Ada; who, though less apparently excited, felt an equal, if not a greater interest in the fate of the stranger.

"Ah! she appears even now to be full a mile short of the point. And see yonder wave which lifts her up — in another instant, it will dash her on those frowning rocks, and all on board must perish. Oh! Heaven, have mercy on them. There — there — they are lost."

As she spoke, a huge wave came rolling on, lifting the little vessel on its curling summit, and, with a loud roar, bore her, with the wildest impetuosity, towards the frowning cliffs. Downward it came with a terrific crash, its crest flying upwards in showers of foam, and hurling the bark, she was lost to sight among the rocks. All the females, as they beheld the sad spectacle, uttered a cry of horror, and they fancied that they could hear, amid the howling of the storm, the despairing shrieks of the drowning mariners, and could distinguish, among the foam, their dying forms, with their arms stretched out, in their agony, for assistance, where none could come.

"They are all lost!" cried Nina, hiding her face in her hands to shut out the dreadful sight her imagination had conjured up. "May the saints intercede for their souls!"

Her example was followed by Marianna and Mila, while Ada, though pale

and trembling, had pointed the telescope towards the spot, for the purpose of discovering whether any human beings had succeeded in gaining the shore. Not a vestige of the wreck could she see; but on the summit of the cliff, above where she supposed the vessel must have struck, she beheld a person, whom she concluded was old Vlacco, waving, as if to some one below. He and his followers then disappeared down the cliffs.

"There is hope yet, Nina — there is hope yet!" she exclaimed joyfully. "Thank Heaven! some may have escaped."

Chapter Twenty Four.

The morning preceding the storm I have described was very lovely, and the pirate chief had gone out at an early hour; and was standing on the edge of the cliff overlooking the harbour and the sea, while he meditated on the plan of some future predatory expedition he had proposed to himself to undertake on board the Sea Hawk. He was interrupted in a short time by the appearance of one of his followers, who had come up the ravine from the bay below.

"Pardon, chief, for my thus coming on you without warning; but I have tidings of importance to communicate," said the man, making a reverential obeisance.

"What is it, Baldo?" asked Zappa. "Haste, I am always impatient of news."

"It is this, chief. A boat arrived this morning, soon after break of day, from the island of Naeiri, and a man, who has come in her, Gerassimo Listi, one of the scouts, states that a British ship of war has been anchored some days at the farther end of it, and that he suspects — "

"Where is the man, this Gerassimo Listi?" exclaimed Zappa, interrupting him suddenly. "I want not to hear his suspicions — I will examine him — where is he, I say?"

"Under the walls of the tower, chief, waiting your return," replied the man.

"Send him hither instantly," said Zappa. "Then go in search of Vlacco, and tell him I would speak with him — I may have need of his counsel."

The man hurried off to obey the orders he had received, while Zappa stood, with his arms folded on his bosom, waiting the coming of the messenger.

"A ship of war, and British," he muttered. "There must be some cause for her coming here. She may possibly be in search of me; but yet, how can it be known where I am to be found? and that English merchant vessel, I took good care that neither she nor any on board should tell tales. Well, friend, what news do you bring me?" he asked, turning to a man in the costume of a Greek fisherman, who now approached. "Haste, tell it me."

"Why, chief, for the last six days, in a sheltered bay, to the west end of our island, a brig of war, carrying eighteen guns, has been at anchor. When she first came in, I thought she had come to remain one or two nights only, to supply herself with water, for there is a fine spring there, and perhaps with fuel; but she hoisted no flag, and seemed to have no intention of communicating with the shore; and, instead of going away, there she remained, day after day, till my suspicions of her intentions were excited. I watched her narrowly for some time, and even pulled close round her two days ago; and I am convinced, from her appearance, and the language I heard spoken, that she is British. Now, it struck me, knowing what sort of character were the people of that nation, that she had come there for the purpose of looking out after the Sea Hawk, or the mistico; and as soon as I arrived at this conclusion, I hurried off to bring you

the information."

"I believe your suspicions are turned in the right direction; and it will be necessary to be on our guard," replied the pirate, who had listened somewhat impatiently to the man's account.

"But here comes Vlacco — we will hear what is his opinion on the subject."

The consultation between the pirate and his lieutenant-governor — for so we may designate old Vlacco — was earnest and brief.

The result was that Zappa instantly descended the cliffs, down to the bay, where the loud blast of a horn speedily collected a large number of his followers, always ready to undertake any exploits in which he led them.

He selected as many as he required for his purpose, and ordered them to prepare for embarking in the mistico, called the Zoe, in the space of a quarter of an hour. Meantime, he despatched a messenger to the tower to bring his arms and some dress, which might serve him as a disguise should it be necessary.

The island spoken of lay about thirty miles to the westward of the harbour; and, towards it, the mistico, as she emerged from between the cliffs, shaped her course under all sail, with the wind on the larboard beam. The little vessel flew across the water at a rapid rate; for, though the sea was smooth, there was a fresh breeze to fill the sails.

All the crew were in high spirits — they invariably were when Zappa led them, as they believed he would always show them where plunder was to be obtained; and they were not a little disappointed when he thought fit to inform them that he now required them to perform a service not only of no profit, but with considerable danger attending it; and yet one which was absolutely necessary, as the safety of the island demanded it.

"You must understand, my friends, that, if the brig we have heard of, is, as I have every reason to believe, a British man-of-war, her purpose is either to watch for our Sea Hawk, and to attack her the next time she goes out of harbour, or to destroy our strongholds on shore. How, though, in the latter point, I do not think she would have any chance of success, we should find her a remarkably disagreeable antagonist to the brig; in fact, to confess the truth, it would be wiser to run away than to fight her. Those English are determined fellows; they will tight as long as their own ship is afloat; and, on your decks afterwards, if they can manage to get there. Now, if I find that my suspicions are correct — and I shall venture on board even to ascertain their purpose — my proposal is, that we treat the enemy as we treated the Turks; we will watch our opportunity; and, during some dark night, we will let a fire-ship float down across their bows when they are not dreaming of any such thing — and we will blow them all up together. We must be near to knock on the head any stragglers, who are not killed at once by the explosion; and then, as no one will survive to say how the accident happened, it will be supposed her magazine caught fire; and we shall escape all suspicion."

This speech which was made in choice Romaic — and which, doubtless, sounded much more heroic and elegant in that idiom than in simple English,

was highly applauded by his followers — indeed, had they ever heard of Homer, they would have considered it equal in substance and talent to anything ever uttered by the most valiant of the heroes he speaks of. It was scarcely concluded, however — and they were still discussing the subject, when the man at the helm, who had kept his eye to windward, exclaimed that he saw a black cloud to the south-east, which he was certain betokened a sudden storm, and would advise the postponement of all discussions till they got safely into port. He was an old Levant mariner, who, unlike his race in general, was rather fonder of action than words; and, though he had no objection to cut a throat, or plunder a ship, he did not approve of talking about it. Though he was a sulky old rascal, Zappa had great confidence in his sagacity, and accordingly turned his eye in the direction to which he pointed. He there saw, too certainly, a mass of black clouds which had, by this time collected, and which, every moment adding others to their number, came sweeping towards them.

"We must look out for ourselves, my men," he exclaimed. "Lower the sails while we have smooth water, and close reef them. We will try to get under the lee of the land, till the fury of the tempest has passed."

The order was no sooner given than obeyed; and the sails were closely reefed and hoisted again before the first blast of the tempest struck the vessel. She had by this time performed rather more than two-thirds of her voyage, so that she had some eight miles more to go over before she could get under shelter of the land. If she could succeed in doing this before the height of the storm came on, she would be in comparative safety; and if not, she might be driven far up the gulf, before she could get under the lee of any other shore. The safest plan would be at once to run back for their own port, which there was every probability of their reaching, though not quite a certainty, as a shift of the wind might possibly drive them to the northward of it. As, however, Zappa was anxious to ascertain all about the English ship, he determined to persevere. I have already described one or two storms, and may probably have to introduce two or three more, so I will not weary my readers by telling them how the waves leaped and tumbled, and foamed; and the wind roared and the vessel struggled madly through them. It is enough to say that it blew a very hard gale, and that the oldest mariners on board never wished to be out in a harder. Even Zappa himself, who was accustomed to take things very philosophically, began to think, when it was too late, that it would have been wiser to have gone quietly home again.

They had, fortunately, kept well to windward of their course, and were thus able to keep well away to fetch the north of the island; thus bringing the wind and the sea abaft the beam. Two or three seas came rolling up after them, just before they got well in with the land, and very nearly swamped the Zoe, and drowned Zappa and all his crew; which event would, doubtless, have been a very great benefit to society in general, although, fortunately for the interest of my history, which it would have materially injured, it did not occur; but the pirate and his followers got safely into a little bay, where they dropped their

anchor, and offered up their thanksgivings to their patron saints, for having preserved them from the great danger they had just encountered.

After having thus piously performed their religious duties, they set to work to prepare the materials for a fire-ship, with which they purposed to blow the English brig and all her crew to the devil. The storm had soon spent its fury, and in the evening they again got under weigh, and beat round to the south side of the island to the bay, where they had at first intended anchoring, it being, by far the safest, as the wind was very likely to shift round, and blow with almost equal violence down the gulf. Among the islands of the Archipelago, the gales generally come from the northward, and it is consequently considered always more prudent to anchor under a southern shore. The pirates now recollected, as they were congratulating themselves on their own escape, that the English brig had been seen anchored in a bay to the south-west of the island; and they began piously to hope that she might have been driven on shore, and lost with all her hands, which would have saved them the expense and trouble of fitting up their fire-ship, and the risk of attempting to use it. Before, however, they took any steps in that direction, Zappa determined to pull up into the bay, where she was reported to have been, and to ascertain what she was, and her purpose in coming there. By daylight next morning, for he was an early man when work was to be done, he was prepared to set out on his expedition.

The bay where the Zoe had anchored, was about five miles from where he believed the British vessel was to be found, so he had a long pull before him. His boat pulled eight oars, and he selected as many of the strongest of his hands to man them. She was a clumsy-looking craft, and did not appear as if any amount of force could drive her through the water; indeed, she seemed to be a mere fishing-boat, such as are used in those waters. He had the precaution also to pile up a couple of nets in her bow and stern, and also to take on board a large supply of fish, which he got from some fisherman of the place, so that nothing was wanting to complete the deception; for he had taken care that all his men should be habited in the ordinary fisherman's dress as he was himself.

As the boat left the side of the mistico, she had, in every respect, the appearance of one belonging to a harmless fisherman just returned from his day's avocation. Although Zappa had with justice full confidence in his own masquerading talents, he wisely did not wish to run any unnecessary risk, and he, therefore, ordered the mistico to get under weigh, and to sweep close in shore after him, that he might, in case of necessity, have some support at hand; she was, however, not to come nearer than a mile from the harbour, where he expected to find the brig, for fear of causing his character to be suspected. Every arrangement being made, the boat shoved off — away she pulled, while he quietly sat on the top of the nets, smoking his pipe with perfect unconcern, as if he had nothing else to think of besides where he should find the best market for his fish.

For about four miles the men pulled on at a rapid pace, laughing and joking as they toiled at their oars. A headland, from which a reef of rock projected

some way out into the sea, then presented itself, and, as they pulled round it, the mouth of a harbour gradually opened on them. It was a secure and landlocked place, and some way up it Zappa discerned the tall masts of the brig he was looking for. His practised eye at once recognised her as a brig-of-war, and, as he drew nearer, he had little doubt from her build that she was British. He had, however, made up his mind to run every risk, so he pulled boldly up the harbour towards her.

"Now, my men," he said, addressing his crew," remember, everything depends on your coolness and courage. We are going to put our heads into the lion's mouth, and, by all the gods of our ancestors, if we give him cause he will bite them off without the slightest ceremony. Do not stir from your seats, and pretend not to understand a word which is said to you, which it is not very likely you will do; but should any on board speak Romaic, make any excuse which occurs to you for not leaving your boat while I am on board."

By the time he had finished this address, they were within a cable's length of the brig.

"What boat is that?" hailed the sentry on the poop.

On which Zappa, concluding that the hail was intended for him, held up a large fish in his hand.

"A fishing-boat coming up astern, sir," said the sentry to the officer of the watch.

"Let her come alongside, then — we want some fish," said the officer in return.

"Ah! I think I know that brig!" exclaimed Zappa — "I am certain of it — she is no other than the one which lay in Valetta harbour when I was last there; and her captain, too, was, I learnt, the very officer I met at the ball, who was dancing so frequently with my fair prisoner. Now, by some wonderful chance or other, he has discovered that she was not lost in the Zodiac, and has come here to look for her — I see it all at once, and if I am right — good luck befriend me; for, should he discover me, I have not a chance of escape. It would be wiser not to venture on board, but to pull quietly back to the mistico, and to wait till night, when we may try the effect of our fire-ship; but, then again, it is not likely that any one but he should know me at all, and my dress is so different to what it was when he saw me, and my beard is so grown, that even, should I be brought into his presence, he will not probably recognise me. I may gain something of what they are about, and the venture is, at at events, worth making."

Zappa arrived at this conclusion as his boat ran alongside the Ione, when it was rather too late to think of turning back; indeed, he felt that his attempting to do so would at once bring suspicion on him. It now occurred to him, that to gain any information, it would be necessary to employ some means of exchanging ideas, and for that purpose, he must speak a little of the lingua Franca so generally made use of. With a dauntless air, therefore, he sprang up the side, and, as he stood at the gangway, he ordered his men to hand him up

some of the finest of the fish. While they were doing so, his eye ranged over the decks, fore and aft, and he was glad to see that Captain Fleetwood was not among the officers who were collected on the poop, watching him and his boat. The gun-room steward was the first to become the purchaser of a fine dish of fish for his master, at a very low price, too, which much astonished him. He smelt at them, and examined their gills, and turned them over most critically; for he could not help fancying that there must be some defect.

The fact was, Zappa had entirely forgotten to learn what price to ask; for, as he had seldom before acted the part of a fishmonger, he had not the slightest conception of what was their value, and was very nearly betraying himself thereby. He saw, however, with his usual acuteness, that he had made a mistake, and took care to correct it with the next purchaser, who was the midshipmen's steward, and who came accompanied by their caterer; but though they had to pay more, the price was still so low as to induce them to lay in a stock for future consumption. The warrant-officers and ship's company next commenced purchasing, and all suffered as Zappa gained experience in his new calling.

"But does not the captain eat fish?" he asked of a Maltese seaman, who had been acting the part of interpreter. "Has his servant come to purchase?"

"The captain does not want any fish, he is not on board to eat it," answered the Maltese carelessly. "I wish he were; for he must have been out in that storm yesterday, in one of your little feluccas, and Heaven knows what may have become of him."

"Where has he gone, then?" asked the pirate. "It would have been wiser to have trusted himself in your fine brig here, than in one of our native boats, which our seamen only know how to handle."

"Oh! don't ask me, my friend; we seamen have no business to talk of our captain's doings," replied the Maltese, laughing. "But let me know where you have learned to speak the lingua Franca so well. It is not often that I can understand ten words uttered by the fishermen of these parts."

"I will reply to your question, friend, though you do not answer mine," returned Zappa. "I sailed as a boy to all parts of the coast of the Mediterranean, till my father died, and I came home and married. I have now a mother and sisters, besides a wife and family to support; so I can go roving no longer. And so your captain has gone on an expedition, has he? Have many people accompanied him, for I suppose he did not go alone?"

"As many went as he chose to take with him," replied the Maltese. "If he had ordered them, the whole ship's company would have gone."

"A clear answer, friend. Does anybody else wish to buy more of my fish. Just ask them; for I must be off again to catch a fresh supply for the support of my young family," said the pirate carelessly. "And can you not tell me then where your captain has gone to?"

"I shall begin to think you have some reason for your curiosity, if you ask so many questions," observed the shrewd Maltese. "I was joking about our captain,

and, if you want to see him, I can take you to him."

"Is it so?" answered Zappa, who easily divined the reason of the man's answer, and was far too keen to be deceived by it, or to want a reply.

"I care nothing about your captain, further than that I thought I might sell him some fish if I met him. But you can do me a service, by telling me if I am likely to fall in with any other ships of war, or merchantmen, with whom I may drive my trade?"

"Ah, padrone, I cannot assist you there either; for we seamen know little of what happens outside the ship's planks," returned the Maltese. "It is not often, though, one goes long in these seas without meeting with a cruiser of our own country, and as for merchantmen they are thick enough; but neither one nor the other are likely to come to such out-of-the-way islands as these are."

"When will that man have finished selling his fish there?" sang out the officer of the watch. "Manuel, there — Tell him, as soon as he's done, to shove off. We ought not to hold any communication with the natives," he muttered to himself, as he continued his quarter-deck walk. "These fellows are as sharp as knives, and, if we let them near us, they'll be ferreting out something they ought not to know to a certainty."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Manuel. "Come, Mister Fisherman, the officer says you must not be standing talking here all day, so I'll wish you farewell, and a good haul the next time you let down your nets."

"Thanks, friend, I am generally tolerably successful in that way," answered the pretended fisherman. "Farewell, I shall come alongside again to-morrow, and I hope to find plenty of buyers. I live a little way down the coast, and shall sure to be back, so do not buy of any one else. Caralambro Boboti is my name. Don't forget it. Farewell, again — "

Just as he was uttering these words, and making the usual salaam to the poop, or rather to the officers walking on it, his eye lighted on the countenance of a man ascending the companion-ladder which made even him for an instant turn pale. At first the idea glanced across his mind that he saw an apparition, but the shoulders and the body and legs came next, and he was soon convinced that the person before him was real flesh and blood. No less a person, indeed, than Colonel Gauntlett ascended from below closely followed by his man Mitchell, and stood on the deck of the Ione, glaring at him with a look which convinced him that he was recognised through his disguise. There was not a moment to be lost. If he remained where he stood, the probability was that he would be seized; if he exhibited any fear or hurry, it would be equivalent to condemning himself, and he and his companions would be shot without mercy, as they attempted to escape. He felt at once that his only chance depended on his own coolness so as to make the old officer fancy that he was mistaken in his identity. With the most perfect self-possession, therefore, he repeated his farewell to the Maltese, and was about deliberately to lower himself into his boat, when the colonel threw the whole ship into commotion, by exclaiming in a voice of thunder, —

"That's him! — The scoundrel — the pirate — stop him — fire at him. I'm right, Mitchell, am I not? That's the villain who attacked the Zodiac, and carried off my poor niece?"

"Not a doubt of it your honour. It's the thief of the world who murdered us all, and by the holy poker I'll have him."

As he uttered these words he sprang towards the gangway, nearly capsizing his master, and almost grasped Zappa by the croup of the neck before anybody else understood what the commotion was all about. He missed him, however, and the pirate, with a spring, which the imminence of his danger would alone have enabled him to take, leaped into his boat, and as he did so, he exclaimed to his crew, who saw that something was wrong, —

"Shove off, or we are dead men!"

The pirates waited no further words to excite them to exertion, and a few strokes sent the boat clear off the brig's side.

So great, mean time, was the impetus Mitchell had gained, that when he missed catching Zappa, he could not again bring himself up, and souse overboard in the water he went, his head fortunately escaping the gunnel of the pirate's boat by a few inches. In revenge, an old pirate attempted to give him his coup de grâce with the blade of his oar, but missed him.

"Arrah, ye cowardly thief to hit a man like that in the water, but I'll mark ye — remember — bad luck to ye," exclaimed Mitchell, as after his first immersion he rose to the surface, where his spluttering and cries drew the attention of the sentry off from the pirates.

"A man overboard," was the first intelligible cry which was heard, and scarcely was it uttered, when three or four men, headed by a midshipman, were overboard to attempt to pick him up. Mitchell's own eagerness to stop the pirates, very nearly prevented them from saving him, for though he had little enough notion of swimming, he struck out manfully after the boat, which the confusion had enabled to gain a good distance from the vessel before any means had been taken to stop her progress. At this juncture the first lieutenant, hearing a noise, came on deck, and soon brought matters into order.

"Silence there, fore and aft," he exclaimed. "Let the proper crews stand by the falls of their boats. Lower the starboard quarter boat, and pick up the man in the water. What is it all about?"

"The pirate, sir — the villain, Zappa was in that boat. Shoot him — stop him, Mr Saltwell, I say!" exclaimed the colonel, scarcely able to speak from his agitation and rage.

"Sentries, fire at the men in that boat," said Mr Saltwell, in a calm tone, which sobered down all who heard him to the proper pitch for comprehending orders. "Hand up a dozen muskets from below, and some ammunition. Lower the larboard quarter boat, and give chase after that fellow."

Each order was obeyed with the rapidity with which it was given; but in lowering the starboard gig, the after falls got jammed, and her head came right into the water, and almost filled her. This delay prevented the other gig from

going in chase, till she had picked up the people in the water, and taken them on board; but all caused delay, and both boats set off in chase nearly together.

Meantime Zappa heard the noise on deck, and guessed that the colonel was explaining who he was, and that he should soon have the boats sent after him.

"Pull till your sinews crack, my friends," he shouted to his men. "We have no child's play now; but keep a good heart, and we shall get clear."

Just as he spoke, he looked back at the brig, he saw the barrel of a musket glancing in the sun, and a shot came flying over his head. Another followed, and buried itself in the pile of nets against which he leaned.

"If they have no better shot among them we need not fear," he shouted. "Keep a good heart, my men. The Zoe will be close outside, and, when we reach her, we may set the boat at defiance."

He was, by this time, nearly an eighth of a mile from the Ione, and pulling directly out towards the mouth of the harbour. Several other musket-shots had been fired at him, and hit a man in the side, and severely hurt him, but he still declared himself able to keep at his oar.

A long brass gun had, however, been got up on the poop, which, loaded with musket-balls, was let fly at them. The shower fell thick around them, and had it not been for the shelter of the nets, more than one shot might have proved fatal to Zappa.

Another pirate was wounded, but, fortunately, not enough to disable him, or their prospect of escape would have been much diminishes. The man turned pale as he tried to bind a handkerchief round his arm to stop the bleeding; but he still continued tugging at his oar.

"Never fear, my chief, we will all be pierced through and through before we give in," he exclaimed. "Row on bravely, my comrades, row on."

The two gigs were now in full chase, rather more than a quarter of a mile astern, and the brig had ceased firing, leaving all the work to be performed by them. Linton had command of the first gig, Tompion of the second, and both had some loaded muskets in their stern sheets, and all the men had their cutlasses and pistols; all these necessary arrangements having considerably delayed the boats, but Saltwell judged rightly, that it would be worse than folly to send unarmed men against such desperate characters as the pirates. There was a strong breeze blowing nearly across the harbour, from the north-west, and, as soon as Zappa had got from under the lee of the land, and felt the full force of it, he considered that he should be able to make more way under sail than by pulling. Two of the people were obliged to lay on their oars for the purpose of hoisting it, and, as soon as the English saw this, they set up a loud shout, thinking the chase was going to give in. They soon saw their mistake, and, as the large lateen sail rose above the little stump of a mast, the boat felt the force with which she was pressed onward, and away she darted over the water. The English bent to their oars till the good ash sticks almost cracked, each boat vying with the other to get ahead. Do all they could, however, they could not overtake the Greek. Linton saw that, if they were to catch the pirate,

they must kill each man who came to the helm, so as to keep the boat luffed up in the wind. He accordingly raised a musket and fired. It was a good shot, and, though Zappa escaped, the man next him received the ball in his bosom. He fell back with a deep groan, a convulsive shudder passed through his frame, and he was dead.

"If that is to be the game," exclaimed the pirate, grinding his teeth with passion till now not expressed. "I must try which of us is the best shot."

And forthwith he drew from under the nets two rifles which had been concealed there.

"Steady the helm here, Baldo, while I try to punish our pursuers."

He fired. His first shot seemed to take no effect. He raised the second; a wild shriek came across the waters, uttered by the poor fellow who pulled the stroke oar of Linton's boat, on whom his too sure aim had taken effect. Both boats now, in revenge, began firing as fast as the muskets could be loaded, and the Greeks were compelled to crouch down in the bottom of their boat to avoid the shot. Zappa kept his seat boldly at the helm. A reef, as I said, ran off the mouth of the harbour on the eastern side, and, to double it, so as to regain the mistico, it would be necessary to make one if not more tacks, and here the light gigs would have an immense advantage over him. The distance to the point round which he must go was about three-quarters of a mile, but he already had a good start, and, if no other accident happened, he might hope to beat round it before the gigs could come up with him. He must now, however, depend entirely on his sail, for neither of the two wounded men were fit to pull an oar, and, with a diminished crew, the chances would be against him, should the wind fail. It was an animating struggle, and equally exciting to pursuers and pursued. Zappa encouraged his followers, and urged them to persevere to the last, hinting at the certainty of a rope and running noose, as the alternative, if they were caught. Linton, on his part, cheered on his men, and told them the safety of their beloved captain, as well as that of a young countrywoman, depended on their overtaking the pirate.

The body of poor Knox, who had been killed, was laid down at the bottom of the boat, and Togle, who was midshipman of the gig, took his place, so that they very soon recovered the ground which had been lost. As they cleared the western shore of the harbour, the wind was found to draw more up its coast, and fresh off the water, and a slight sea came rolling in, sparkling brightly in the sunshine, adding a life and beauty to the scene, with which the work of death going on was sadly disconsonant. The British seamen cheered, and bent to their oars with renewed vigour, making the spray fly in showers, full of rainbow hues, over the bows, as Linton spoke to them, though they wanted no fresh stimulus to urge them to exertion.

"They will have to tack presently, and we shall soon be alongside them," he exclaimed. "We will pay them off, my men, and, if we do not catch them the first tack, we will the second."

Meantime Zappa held on his course, firing occasionally at the boats, but

with less success than at first. When also he round that the wind headed him, he began to calculate that the enemy would, to a certainty, be alongside him before he could weather the point, and that if they once got there, his chance of escaping was small indeed. He felt, in truth, that he had put his head into the lion's mouth, and that the lion was wagging his tail.

"Curses on the wind, to fail me just as I wanted it the most," he exclaimed, measuring with his eye the distance between him and his pursuers. "If it was not for the reef, we should have done well, and there comes the Zoe, beating up to our assistance. They have heard the firing, and guessed that something has gone wrong. Does any one know if there is a passage through the reef? It struck me, as we came in, that there was a spot free from sea-weed, where the water looked deep, which should be just now on our larboard bow. Per Bacco, I see it, and will try it. If we strike, we shall fight there to better advantage than under weigh, and the mistico will be, soon up to our assistance."

None of the pirates had been through the passage, if passage there were, but all expressed the wish to try it, instead of having to beat round the point. The helm was accordingly kept up, and, to the surprise of the pursuers, away the Greek boat darted directly towards the rocks. There was, as I have said, some little sea, sufficient, as it met the impediments of the reef, to make a long line of breakers. There was one small spot where it could not be said that there was no foam, but where the water was rather less agitated than elsewhere. It was here that the pirates expected to find an opening, but, as they drew near it, they almost doubted the wisdom of making the attempt, so little prospect was there of their being able to cross it. The English, meantime, were rather divided in their opinions. Some thought that, driven to desperation, they had resolved to destroy themselves and their boats; while others were as far wrong on the opposite side, and fancied that they were well acquainted with some passage through which they intended to pass. Another minute would decide the question.

On the Greek boat flew with redoubled speed, as she was kept more away. She was already among the broken water. Zappa, his nerves unshaken, stood up to steer, while a man, leaning over the bow, tried to make out the channel. As soon as the pirate showed himself, both the English boats opened their fire on him; but, though several shot whistled round his head he remained unharmed. Sea after sea, huge masses of glittering foam came rolling in on them, threatening to fill the boat, should she for one instant meet with any impediment.

Every man held his breath, and looked with an anxious glance ahead. On either side, the water came dancing up and lapping over the gunnel, and beyond, the heads of the black rocks appeared amidst the frothy cauldron through which they sailed. Now the side of the boat almost grazed a rock, which, had she struck, would have sent her into a thousand splinters. A short distance more and they would be safe. The Zoe had observed them, and was standing towards them to render them assistance. Even their enemies forbore

to fire, so perilous was their situation, and so certain appeared their destruction. On they rushed.

"I can see no passage," exclaimed the man in the bows. "We are all lost! Ah, no! Starboard the helm — starboard! Haul off the sheet a little! Up with the helm again! Ease off the sheet. Huzza! huzza! We are safe!"

The last great danger was past; a bend in the channel had been discovered, through which the boat glided; and now she floated in clear water, and held her rapid course towards the mistico. No sooner was the chief on board the Zoe, than the helm was put up, and off she ran under all sail, with her head to the island of Lissa.

Chapter Twenty Five.

Doubtless, the reader will be anxious to hear by what wonderful event Colonel Gauntlett and his man, Mitchell, had escaped from the death they were supposed to have suffered, and whether poor Bowse, and any of the survivors of his crew, had been equally fortunate; but, as I have matter of still more importance to communicate in this chapter, I must entreat him to have patience till I can return to that part of my history. We left the old pirate, Vlacco, on his way, by Nina's directions, to give his assistance to any who might have survived the wreck of the Greek mistico. He had no particular wish to turn philanthropist in his old age, so he went rather in a sulky humour, as he would very much rather have knocked them on the head than have had, not only to save their lives, but to refrain from touching any of their property. The orders of his chief's lady were, however, not to be disobeyed; so he and his companions hurried on as fast as they could go with the rope and spars they had with them.

"Ah! there she drives," he muttered. "She might just as well have come on shore here, and saved me the trouble of going so far. The boat is well handled though, and her crew don't seem inclined to give it up to the last. They don't know what they are coming to, or they would be throwing up their arms in despair. Well, it's some people's fate to be hung, and some to be drowned, so they must have made up their minds to go out of the world in the last way."

He walked on for some distance further, by which time the little mistico was close in with the rocks.

"I don't know though," he continued. "She has got past Point Ausa, and I'm not quite so certain that she won't run right up into Ziyra Bay. So, by the saints, she has; and if she had tried to get there, she could not have done it better. Now, on my sons, or the sea will be too quick for us, and will have carried those strangers away before we get there."

A few minutes more brought him and his party to the edge of a lofty cliff, from whence they looked down into a small sandy bay, where, already almost high and dry, lay the mistico they had seen approaching the shore. The entrance to the bay was through a very narrow passage between two rocks, which could only just have allowed her to scrape through; but once inside, the force of the sea was so much broken by them that she had received little or no damage. The waves were, however, sufficiently high to break over her, and almost to fill her, so that the crew were compelled to land as fast as they could. This they accomplished by dropping down from the little stump of a bowsprit as the water receded, and running up on to the dry sand before it returned.

"You are lucky fellows to get on shore so easily," muttered old Vlacco. "But now you are there, you are very like mice in a trap, you cannot get out without my assistance."

From the appearance of the bay, there seemed to be much truth in his

observation, for so perpendicular were the cliffs, that no one could by any possibility, have scaled them.

He counted the people as they landed, and saw that there were four men and a boy; and he was now watching to learn what they would do. There was, as he was well aware, a narrow pathway cut up the side of the cliff; but the lower part was concealed, by leading into a small cavern, so that no strangers were likely to find it. It had been formed, probably, in the days when the island was a regular fortress, and had been thus arranged, that no enemy should land there, and take them unawares.

The crew of the mistico immediately set to work to try and find their way to the summit of the cliff; and it was while they were so doing that Vlacco showed himself. He went to the lowest part of the cliff, and beckoned to them to come under it, and then driving two of the spars into the ground, he made a rope fast to them, and lowered it over the cliff. It was immediately seized by the boy, who, with the agility of a monkey, commenced hauling himself up by it, towards the summit. It was nervous work to see him now swinging in the air, now placing his feet on the narrow ledges of the rock, and thus making play for a few yards to rest his arms. At last, he stood safely at the top, and taking off his cap, cheered to his companions to follow his example.

"Many thanks, signor," he said, addressing Vlacco in a language which sounded something like Maltese, to which nation he apparently belonged, by his dress and the excessively dark hue of his skin.

One after the other followed, till the whole crew were safely landed.

They were all dressed as Maltese; but one of them addressed Vlacco in Romaic, and said —

"He and his shipmates had to thank him for the assistance he had afforded them. If our master was here, he would thank you, too; but, poor fellow, he and the mate were washed overboard, and we now know not where we have got to, or where to go. We must get you and your friends on shore here to aid us in getting our vessel afloat, and we must then try to find our way back to Malta."

"You'll not find that so easy," muttered the old pirate. "But how came you to hit the bay in the clever way you did? No one could have done it better who knows the island well."

"Our good luck served us, and our prayers to the saints wore efficacious," returned the Maltese. "We did not expect to succeed so well, I can assure you."

"Some people are not born to be drowned," muttered, in a gruff voice, the old pirate, who, since he had given up robbing on his own account, had no further fears on the score of the alternative generally mentioned. "You're in luck, I say; and since you happen not to be food for fishes, as I expected you would be by this time, I must tell you, that I have orders to bring you into the presence of the chief lady of this island, by whose directions I came all this way to try and save your lives, for I should not have taken so much trouble of my own accord, I can tell you."

"The chief lady of the island," repeated the Maltese, who saw that it would

be folly to take notice of the rude tone a the old man's observations. "Who is she, friend?"

"Who is she? Why, the wife, or mistress, or lady love, or whatever you like to call her, of our chief, Zappa," answered Vlacco.

"Ah?" ejaculated the Maltese, and he turned to one of his companions, and interpreted what he had heard in a language Vlacco did not understand.

It seemed much to affect the man, who was a young, dark-skinned Maltese, though with features more of the European cast than theirs generally are. He spoke a few words to the interpreter, who then said —

"But, tell me, my friend, is the lady you speak of a Greek of these islands, or a stranger? We are anxious to know who our intended benefactress is."

"I don't see how it matters to you, who or what she is, provided she is of service to you," returned the pirate. "But as you want to know, I'll tell you, she's a foreigner, and our chief seems very fond of her; and she is of him, I should think, by the way she looks at him. Will that answer serve you?"

The interpreter repeated what he had heard to his companion, who was evidently greatly agitated, though he tried to master his feelings, so as not to allow them to attract the attention of the islanders. He was able to say a few words to the interpreter, who immediately asked —

"Has the lady been long in the island, or has she lately arrived, friend?"

"I am not going to answer any more of your questions," replied old Vlacco, who had gradually been losing the little amiability he ever possessed. "I don't know why I said anything at all to you. My orders were to see you safely into the lady's tower, where I must lock you up; and, as soon as our chief comes back, if he takes my advice, he'll heave you all off the top of the cliff together."

"What, is your chief absent then?" said the Maltese, with a gleam of satisfaction in his countenance.

"He is," replied Vlacco.

"Where has he gone, friend?" asked the persevering interpreter.

"Hough," was all the old pirate would answer.

"When do you expect him back, friend?" inquired the interpreter.

To this Vlacco would not deign a "Hough;" but looked as if he was very much inclined to shove his interlocutor over the cliff.

This put an effectual stop to further conversation with any of the islanders; but the strangers continued every now and then, making observations to each other in a low tone, as they proceeded on their way to the tower.

Old Vlacco hurried them on to the causeway, and past the eastern tower, which was the one where Ada Garden resided, till they reached the habitation of poor Nina. He then opened the door, rudely shoved them all in, and told them to amuse themselves as they best could in the dark, while he went to inform the lady of their arrival.

The fury of the summer tempest had subsided, and the dark masses of clouds had passed away, leaving only a few loitering stragglers to follow, in order to restore the sky to all its usual brightness. The untiring waves still

continued lashing the base of the rocks; but their roar had lessened, and the white foam no longer flew in showers of spray up the steep cliffs.

Ada Garden and the young Italian sat at the window watching for the appearance of the shipwrecked mariners. As Ada saw them at a distance, she at once recognised them from their dress as Maltese, and she longed to question them, to learn if they had come lately from their native island, and could give her any information respecting the vessels of war which were there; and whether the Ione had yet sailed for England.

At all events, she thought, if they could effect their escape, they might convey intelligence of her situation to Malta; and she doubted not, trusting to the chivalry of her countrymen, that even should Captain Fleetwood have sailed for England, every effort would be made for her release. She whispered her hopes to Nina, who understood and promised to forward her wishes.

"I should much like to speak with these poor men myself," she observed. "But my so doing might excite suspicions which might effectually counteract it, and bring destruction on their heads."

"Fear not, lady; I will speak to them, and urge them to convey tidings of you," said Nina. "For though I think not my husband would allow innocent men to be injured, yet of late he has done acts and said things which make me very wretched, though I do not comprehend them. Even Paolo has of late come to see me but seldom, and is more silent and reserved than I ever before remember him. I know not where it will all end, but now and then dark shadows pass before my sight, and congregate in the distance, till the whole future seems full of them. But I rave, lady. Ah! here come the strangers."

Ada had scarcely listened to what her companion was saying, so intently had she been watching the Maltese seamen. Her heart beat so quick with agitation, that she felt it would overcome her strength; hope and fear rose alternately in her bosom, yet she was sure she was not mistaken. Notwithstanding the disguise, the dark-stained skin, she was as certain nearly as of her own existence, that she beheld Charles Fleetwood. Love cannot be mistaken. And yet his air and walk were not as usual; the independent, buoyant step was not there, the free, bold carriage of the gallant sailor was gone, and he seemed to drag on his steps as if weary of life, instead of being engaged in an expedition, which she well knew must be to rescue her. She had loved him before, but as she now saw him risking his liberty and his life for her, all the tenderest feelings of a woman's nature gushed forth, and she longed to rush into his arms to tell him of her gratitude, and deep, undying devotion. She longed to call him to make him look up, to soothe his heart by letting him know of her safety; but prudence restrained her; she felt that the slightest sign of recognition might prove his destruction, and she endeavoured to conceal her feelings even from him. But the quick glance of the young Italian soon discovered that she was suffering from some powerful emotion, and the direction of her eyes betrayed the cause. She at once saw that there was some one she knew, but as Ada said nothing, she thought it kinder not to utter her

suspicions.

"I shall soon discover when I see them together," she said, mentally. "And I will not agitate her by asking her questions."

In her heart of hearts, Nina hoped that the strangers would be able to assist Ada in her flight, for though she felt herself attracted to the beautiful stranger, she was not the less anxious to get her safe out of the island.

Nina accordingly rose to take her departure, observing that the storm was over, and that she must hasten to make arrangements about the shipwrecked strangers, and to send for her brother to aid her, as they were not likely to receive much assistance or commiseration from Vlacco. She looked attentively at Ada as she said this, and the expression of thankfulness which she saw on her countenance convinced her still more that she was right in her conjectures.

As soon as the shipwrecked seamen found themselves alone, the one who had hitherto appeared of the least importance, and had been seen to put on so dejected an air, on hearing that they were to be conducted into the presence of the chief's wife, was now evidently considered by the rest as their leader. By a strenuous effort he aroused himself, observing, in a language which was much more like pure English than Maltese, "We must, while we can, examine the condition of the fortress in which we are confined; we may find it necessary to try and let ourselves out. Except the door, there seems, however, to be no outlet; but there is a gleam of light coming down from the further corner, and there must be an aperture to let it through."

"I will go in, and see all about it," exclaimed the Maltese lad, also speaking remarkably good English, and in a few minutes, his voice was heard calling on his companions to find their way to the foot of the steps, and to follow him into the chamber above.

In a few minutes, the whole party were assembled in the apartment I have described as the pirate's chief store-room.

"The enemies have chosen to put us in possession of the fortress, and have given us every means of keeping it," exclaimed the Maltese lad, examining the arms and ammunition. "All we have to do, is to barricade the door below, and we might hold out a long siege."

"And very little use that would be, when our object is to get away as fast as we can," returned another. "However, we know where to find a good supply of arms if we want them."

Meantime, their leader, and the one who had acted as interpreter, had gone together into the story above.

"It is too true, then," exclaimed the first, after they had examined the apartment, looking as if he could scarcely restrain his grief. "This is evidently a lady's chamber, and furnished, too, with all the luxury and treasure the pirate would lavish on his wife. Yet it cannot be hers. I know her too well — gentle and affectionate as she is, she would die rather than submit to such degradation. But what is this?" he took up a book, which lay on the table.

It was one he had often seen in the hands of Ada Garden, and her name was

on the title-page. Charles Fleetwood, for he it was who had come to rescue her he loved, as he discovered this fatal confirmation of his worst fears, covered his face with his hands, and groaned. But he quickly recovered himself.

"No, no — I will not believe it. The thought is too horrible — too dreadful. I wrong her to entertain it for an instant. Yet, who can be this lady the old pirate spoke of? He said she would soon be here. Would to heaven she were come?"

The whole party had just collected together in the lower story, when they heard the gate open, and, a female figure appeared at the entrance.

Captain Fleetwood's heart beat audibly, for, during the first moment, he could not tell whether it might not be Ada Garden; but the next, a gleam of light, and to him it was one of sunshine, exhibited a graceful and beautiful person; but a stranger. In his satisfaction, he was very nearly forgetting himself, and rushing forward to inquire for Ada. She stopped to address the old pirate, who had opened the gate.

"You have treated these poor men with scant hospitality, thrusting them down here, wet and hungry," she observed to him, in an angry tone. "Conduct them up to my room, and I will inquire whence they come, and how they happened to be cast on the shore. Send, also, for Signor Paolo, for some of them seem hurt, and may require his aid; and, good Vlacco, see that food be supplied to them, of the best the island affords, and let a chamber be prepared for them in the house, near to the room where my brother sleeps. We will, at least, endeavour to be hospitable to the few strangers who are ever likely to visit our shores."

Nina ascended to her chamber, into which Vlacco directly afterwards ushered the Maltese seamen. She inclined her head in acknowledgment to the reverence they made her, and then ordered Vlacco to retire, and to fulfil her directions.

"Do any of you speak Italian?" she asked in that language.

"Si, signora, I do," said Fleetwood, stepping forward. "I am also eager, in the name of my comrades, to thank you for your interference in our favour; nor are we at all assured, that without it, our lives would have been safe, had we fallen into the hands of some of those islanders."

"As to that," returned Nina, "I cannot say. They are rude men, and are little accustomed to encounter strangers. But I am glad to be of service to you, and will be of more, if you can point out the way."

"The greatest you can render us, signora, will be to order some twenty or thirty men to aid us in launching our mistico. She is, fortunately, uninjured, and we may thus be enabled to continue our voyage."

"They shall do so to-morrow morning, by which time the sea will be calm," said Nina. "I have ordered lodging and food to be prepared for you. And tell me, can I, in any other way, serve you?"

Fleetwood felt a strong inclination to confide in her completely. Before, he had dreaded seeing Ada as the mistress of the tower; and now, he almost wished that she had been, for the dreadful thought occurred to him that she

might be dead. He was considering how he should frame some question to learn the truth, when his eye fell on the book, which he knew contained her name. He took it up, and, as if by chance, his eye had now, for the first time, seen it, he pointed it out to Nina.

"Lady," he said, "do you know the person to whom this book belongs?"

"No," returned Nina; "I know no lady of that name — but stay. Is the lady young, and fair, and beautiful, for, if so, I have just parted with her?"

"She is, she is!" exclaimed Fleetwood, in a voice of agitation, the colour rushing to his face, and showing through the darkly-stained skin. "Where is she, lady? Oh, tell me!"

Nina smiled.

"You have betrayed yourself, signor," she answered. "But you may confide in me — I will not injure you. I thought from the first, that you were not a common seaman, in spite of your costume. Such speak not with the accent you do. You take a great interest in this fair girl. Confess it."

"I do, signora; and, moreover, I would risk everything to rescue her."

"I thought as much," returned Nina. "I may find means to serve you — and will do so. But remember, signor, that I may also some day call upon you to assist one who, although you may look upon him as an enemy, may demand your aid. Promise me that, should I ever require it, you will exert all your energies — you will strive to the utmost — you will even risk your life and safety, if I demand it of you, to serve him I will not now name. Say you will do this, and you enable me to do all you require. Otherwise, I cannot; for in aiding your wishes, I am disobeying his orders, and I cannot justify my conduct to myself."

"You must remember, signora, that a naval officer, and, I confess to you, that I am one, owes his first duty to his country; next that, gladly will I obey your wishes," returned Fleetwood. "If any one, in whom you take interest, is in difficulty, and I have the means to save him, I promise, faithfully, to do so. More, I cannot say. Will that satisfy you?"

"It does. Say, whence did you come — and whither were you bound, when you were driven on this coast. It may be necessary to show that I have not forgotten the most important part of the examination."

"We come from Malta and were bound for Smyrna, but were driven out of our course by a gale of wind, in which we lost our master and mate. Our vessel was wrecked, and becoming the purchasers of the mistico, we endeavoured to find our way home in her. None of us, however, understanding navigation, we were afraid to continue our voyage till we found some one to supply their place. This, lady, is the story we have to tell, to account for our appearance on the island; but, in one point, believe me, I do not deceive you, when I assure you, that we come not here to injure, in any way, the chief of this island."

"Enough, signor; I trust to you," replied Nina. "I will now have you and your companions conducted to the apartments prepared for you. There is but small habitable space in the castle, extensive as it once was, and it would lead to

suspicions were you to be better lodged."

She clapped her hands, and little Mila appeared, to conduct the strangers to the abode Nina had selected for them.

Left alone, she stood, for an instant, a picture of misery.

"Alas, alas!" she repeated to herself, "everything I hear and see convinces me that his course is one full of danger, if not, also, of crime. But I am acting for the best, and am gaining a power which may serve him at his utmost need. I am doing what is right."

Poor Nina, the idol she had set up was gradually changing his god-like radiance for a sombre hue, his heavenly countenance for one of dark malignity. So must all false idols change. The brighter and more beautiful they appear at first, the blacker and more hideous will they become.

The adventurers had retired to rest. Their couches were composed of heather, scattered along the sides of the room; but it was covered with thick cloths and rugs, and formed no contemptible resting-place; their drenched clothes had been well dried, and they had enjoyed a plentiful meal. Even Fleetwood had done justice to it; and the Maltese lad, who was no other than our friend Jack Raby, astonished little Mila by the prodigious extent of his midshipman's appetite.

Another seeming Maltese was a person the reader is probably not prepared to meet. He was our friend Bowse, late master of the Zodiac, who, having been rescued from the fate which hung over him, had entreated Captain Fleetwood to be permitted to accompany him, and to share his dangers in recovering Miss Garden.

The Greek captain, Teodoro Vassilato, was the person who had acted as interpreter. He had once been taken prisoner by the pirates, and having a little private revenge of his own to satisfy, he had offered his services, which were too valuable to be refused.

The last person was really a Maltese seaman, long a faithful attendant on Fleetwood. He was to be put forward as the most prominent person, should any doubt arise as to their being really Maltese.

As the reader may have suspected, the shipwreck was the result of design rather than chance or mismanagement; and though they had long been waiting for a gale of wind, better to account for it, and as the most certain means of getting a footing on the island, they had scarcely bargained for one of such violence.

As, however, Captain Vassilato was confident of the spot, they resolved to stand on. They well knew the danger they were running — for they felt that it would be almost certain death, should the pirates discover them; but they had strung up their nerves for the work, and all were anxious to serve Captain Fleetwood, and to rescue Ada Garden from captivity.

Fleetwood had thrown himself on his couch, thinking of Ada, and pondering how he might beat obtain an interview with her, when the door slowly opened, and a dark figure entered, holding a light in his hand. He attentively scrutinised

the countenances of the sleepers, and then stopping before Fleetwood, he threw the light full on his face, so as to awaken him thoroughly, had he slept, and beckoned to him.

Fleetwood sprang to his feet.

"Follow me, signor," whispered the stranger, in Italian. "I have come to conduct you into the presence of one you have long wished to meet."

"To the English lady?" he asked, his voice trembling with agitation.

The stranger laid his finger on his lips as a signal of silence, and beckoned him to follow.

Chapter Twenty Six.

After the Ione had left Cephalonia, she commenced her intricate passage among the innumerable isles and islets of the Grecian Archipelago, towards Lissa, in the neighbourhood of which his new friend Teodoro Vassilato, the captain of the Ypsilante, had appointed a rendezvous with Captain Fleetwood.

On first starting, they were favoured with a fair breeze; but no sooner did they get among the labyrinthine mazes of the islands, than a foul wind set in, and delayed them in a manner which sorely tried Fleetwood's impatient spirit. Any one who has cruised among those islands will know the difficulty of the navigation, and the necessity for constant watchfulness. Besides the thousand islands and islets, there are, in every direction, rocks of all sizes, some just below the water, others rising above it to various heights; and although there are no regular tides, there are powerful and very variable currents, and many a ship has been cast away in consequence of them — the master, by his calculations, fancying himself often well free of the danger, on which he has been in reality running headlong.

The Ione had stood to the southward, and had tacked again to the northward, with the island of Milo blue and distant on her weather beam, when, just as the sun, in his full radiance of glory, was rising over the land, the look-out ahead hailed that there were breakers on the starboard bow.

"How far do you make them?" asked Linton, who was the officer of the watch, as he went forward to examine them himself with his telescope. "By Jove! there is a mass of black rocks there; and I believe there is somebody waving to us on them," he exclaimed. "Here, Raby, take my glass, and see what you can make out."

"I can make it out clearly, sir," replied the midshipman. "There are a number of people on them, and they have a sheet or blanket, or something of that sort, made fast to a boathook or small spar, and they are waving it to attract our attention."

"They have been cast away, then, depend on it, and we must go and see what we can do for them," said Linton. "Run down and tell the captain; and, as you come back, rouse out the master, and ask him how close we may go to the rocks."

The captain and master, as well as all the officers, were soon on deck, and the brig was looking well up towards the rocks, within a few cables' length of which, to leeward, the pilot said they might venture.

There was a good deal of sea running, for it had been blowing very hard the previous day; but the wind had gone down considerably, and Captain Fleetwood expressed his opinion that there would not be much difficulty in getting the people off the rocks, provided they could find an approach to them on the lee side; but on getting nearer, the rock appeared to be of so small an extent, that

the waves curled round it, and made it almost as dangerous to near it on one side as on the other.

"I think that I can make out a part of the wreck jammed in between two rocks, just flush with the water," observed Saltwell, who had been examining the place with his glass. "An awkward place to get on."

"Faith, indeed, it is," said the master. "If we hadn't come up, and another gale of wind had come on, every one of those poor fellows would have been washed away."

"It is an ill wind that blows nobody good," remarked the purser, who was a bit of a moralist in a small way. "Now we have been complaining of a foul wind — and if we had had a fair one, we should have run past those rocks without ever seeing the people on them."

"No higher," exclaimed the gruff voice of the quarter-master, who was conning the ship. "Mind your helm, or you'll have her all aback."

"The wind is heading us," muttered the man at the wheel; "she's fallen off two points."

"Hands about ship," cried Captain Fleetwood. "We'll show the poor fellows we do not intend to give them the go-by. Helm's a-lee! Tacks and sheets! Main-topsail haul. Of all, haul."

And round came the brig, with her head to the eastward, or towards the island of Milo. She was at this time about two miles to the southward of the rock, and that the people on it might not suppose that she was about to pass them, Captain Fleetwood ordered a gun to be fired, to attract their attention, and to show them that they were seen. This appeared to have a great effect; for the officers observed them through their telescopes waving their signal-staffs round and round, as if to exhibit their delight.

"They seem as if they were all drunk on the rock there," said Linton. "I never saw people make such strange antics."

"I fear it is more probable that they are mad," observed the captain. "I have known many instances in which men have been thus afflicted, who having nothing to satisfy their hunger or thirst, have been tempted to drink salt water."

"It proves that they must have been a long time there. We must not keep on long on this tack, master, I suspect."

The Ione was soon about again on the starboard tack, and away she flew, every instant nearing the rock. It soon became evident that Captain Fleetwood was right in his suspicions; for, as they drew closer, they could see that some of the unfortunate wretches had thrown off all their clothing, and were dancing, and leaping, and gesticulating furiously — now joining hands, and whirling round and round, as fast as the inequalities of the ground would allow them, then they would rush into the water, and then roll down and turn over and over, shrieking at the top of their voices. Some, again, were sitting crouching by themselves, moving and gibbering, and pointing with idiot glance at their companions, and then at the vessel. Two or three figures were seen stretched out by the side of the rock, apparently dead or dying. In the centre and highest

part of the rock, a tent was erected, and before it were several persons in a far calmer condition. Some were waving to the brig, others were on their knees, as if returning thanks to Heaven for their approaching deliverance, and two were stretched out on rude couches formed of sails, in front of the tent, too weak to stand up. At last the Ione got under the lee of the rock, and hove to.

"We must take great care how we allow those poor fellows to get into the boats," said Captain Fleetwood. "I need not tell you how much I value every moment; at the same time, in pity for those poor wretches, we must endeavour to rescue them — I propose, therefore, to anchor the cutter at two cables' length from the rock, and to veer in the dinghy till she drops alongside them; we must then allow only two at a time to get into her, and then again haul her off. How many are there — do you count, Mr Linton."

"About forty, sir, including those who appear dead or dying," returned the second lieutenant.

"Twenty trips will take about two hours, as the cutter must return once to the ship with her first cargo. It will be time well spent, at all events," said Fleetwood, calculating in his mind the delay which would be thus occasioned in discovering where Ada had been conveyed, and attempting her rescue. "Mr Saltwell, I will entrust the command of the expedition to you," continued the captain. "Mr Viall," to the surgeon, "we, I fear, shall want your services on board; but, Mr Farral," to the assistant-surgeon, "you will proceed in the cutter, and render what aid you consider immediately necessary. Take, at all events, a couple of breakers of water, and a bottle or two of brandy. You will find some stimulant necessary to revive the most exhausted — I should advise you, Mr Viall, to have some soft food, such as arrow-root, or something of that nature, boiled for them by the time they come off. They have probably been suffering from hunger as well as thirst, and anything of a coarse nature may prove injurious."

The cutter was hoisted out, and every preparation quickly made. Numbers of volunteers presented themselves, but Linton's was the only offer which was accepted, as he undertook to go on to the rock in the first trip the dinghy made, and to render what aid he could to those who appeared to be on the brink of dissolution, when even a few minutes might make the difference, whether they died or recovered. Mr Saltwell gave the order to shove off, and away the cutter pulled up towards the rock, with the dinghy in tow, on her work of humanity.

The captain and those who remained on board watched the progress of the boats, as well as the movements on the rock, with intense interest. It is scarcely possible to describe the excitement on the rock, caused by the departure of the boat. If the actions had before been extravagant, they were now doubly so; they shrieked, they danced, they embraced each other with the most frantic gestures; and, indeed, appeared entirely to have lost all control over themselves.

The cutter dropped her anchor at the distance it was considered advisable from the rock; but her so doing seemed to make the unhappy maniacs fancy

that she was not coming to their assistance, and their joy was at once turned into rage and defiance. One of them leaped into the water and endeavoured to swim towards the boat. Linton, who had taken the precaution before leaving the ship to arm himself, as had Raby, who was his companion, instantly leaped into the dinghy, with the two men destined to pull her; and they urged her on as fast as they could to succour the unhappy wretch, slacking away at the same time a rope made fast to the cutter. They had got near enough to see his eye-balls starting from his head, as he struck out towards them, his hair streaming back, his mouth wide open, and every muscle of his face working with the exertion of which he himself was scarcely conscious, when, as he was almost within their grasp, he uttered a loud shriek, and throwing up his arms, sank at once before them. A few red marks rose where he had been, but they were quickly dispersed by the waves.

"The poor fellow must have broken a blood-vessel, sir," said Raby.

"No, indeed," replied Linton, "every artery must have been opened to cause those dark spots. A ground shark has got hold of him, depend on it. Heaven grant we do not get capsized, or our chance of escape will be small. But, hark! what language are those fellows speaking? It is French, is it not?"

"French, sure enough, sir," replied Jack Raby. "I thought so, before we left the cutter."

"Sacré bêtes Anglais! How dare you venture here? This is our island, far better than your miserable Malta. We have taken possession of it, and will hold it against all the world. Begone with you, or we will sink you, and your ship to the bottom; off, off."

As they were uttering these words, they continued making the most violent gestures of defiance and contempt, but this did not prevent Linton from approaching the rock. It was larger than it had appeared to be at a distance; and at the spot to which he was making there was a little indentation where the water was comparatively smooth. I have said that there was a group of men in front of a tent, at the higher part of the rock, and these they now observed, were armed, and had thrown up a sort of fortification, with planks and chests, and spars, and other things cast on shore from the wreck, aided by the natural inequality of that part of the rock.

"Good Heavens!" thought Linton. "And on so small a spot of ground, could not these men rest at peace with each other?"

Just as the dinghy was within two boat-hooks' length of the rock, a voice from among the group, hailed in English, — "Take care, sir, or those fellows will murder you all. They have been threatening to do it. But if we could but get up a few drops of water here, we should soon be able to quiet them."

"I have the water for you, and I will try what I can do to pacify them," shouted Linton, at the top of his voice. "A present, mes amis" he said in French; "we have come here as friends to aid you; we do not want to take your island, to which you are welcome; and to convince you that we do not come as enemies, any two of you can go off to the large boat there, where they may have as much

food and water as they require."

Two of them rather more sane than the rest, on hearing this, shouted out, — "Food and water, that is what we want — you are friends, we see — we will go."

"No, no — if any go, all shall go!" exclaimed the rest, rushing down to the water; but, so blind was the eagerness of the mass that these were precipitated headlong into the sea, and would have become food for the ground sharks had not Linton and his companions hauled them into the dinghy. He was now afraid that he should be obliged to return at some risk with the boat thus heavily laden, but before doing so he determined to make one more attempt to join the people on the top. His first care, before letting the boat again drop in, was to pour a few drops of brandy-and-water down the throats of the two Frenchmen they had rescued. This so revived them, and with their immersion in the water, so restored their senses, that they rose up in the boat and shouted out to their companions: — "These men are friends — receive them as brethren among you, and we will be answerable for their honesty."

"Now, messieurs, is your time," said one. "Hasten, if you desire to get on shore, or their mood will change."

"Pull in," cried Linton, and in another moment he and Raby, who carried a breaker of water on his shoulder, sprang on shore while the boat was hauled back to the cutter.

There they stood for an instant confronting the most ferocious looking beings it is possible to conceive in human shape. Their beards were long, and their hair wet and tangled, and hanging down over their shoulders, their eye-balls were starting from their heads, and their limbs were emaciated in the extreme, lacerated, and clotted with blood and dirt — scarcely any of them having a rag of clothing to cover them.

"Now, my friends, allow us to proceed to a place where we may sit down and discuss our plans for the future," said Linton, hoping thus to keep them quiet till he could get nearer the summit of the rock.

"Waistcoat bien, c'est bien," they answered. "Monsieur is a man of sense," said one, with a maniac leer at his companion. "We will allow him to make merry at our next feast, eh, comrades?"

And they laughed, and shouted at the wit of the poor wretch.

"We will proceed, then," said Linton, who found them pressing on him. "Push on, Raby, and try and gain the top before these madmen break out again. Let us advance, messieurs."

"What, and join our enemies in the castle up there?" sneered the maniac, who had proposed them joining their feast, of the nature of which they could have little doubt. "No, no. We see that you are no friends of the French, so over you go to feed the fishes."

As he uttered these words, he made a rush at Linton, who with difficulty leaped out of his way, when the miserable wretch, unable to stop himself, ran on till he fell over into the water, where his companions derided his dying struggles. This attracted the attention of some; but the others made a rush at

Linton, who had just time to draw his cutlass, and to keep them off from himself and Raby, who, hampered with the water-cask, could do little to defend himself.

So rapidly had the events I have mentioned taken place, that there was not time even for the dinghy's return to bring them assistance. Had Linton chosen to kill his assailants, he might easily have preserved his own safety; but unwilling to hurt them, unconscious as they were of what they were about, he was very nearly falling a victim to his own humanity. As he and Jack Raby sprang up the rock they got round them, and on a sudden they found themselves attacked from behind. On turning his head for a moment, a powerful wretch seized his sword by the blade, and though it was cutting his hands through and through he would not let it go. At the same instant others threw their arms round his neck, and were dragging him to the ground, where in all probability they would instantly have destroyed him, when two persons sprang down from the top of the rock with heavy spars in their hands, and striking right and left on the heads of the maniacs, compelled them to let go their hold, and allow Linton and Raby to spring to their feet.

"Now, sir, now is your time!" exclaimed one of their deliverers. "Up to the fortress before they rally. They have had such a lesson that they will not think of coming there again."

Neither of the officers required a second call, and in an instant they were in front of the tent.

"You have brought us water, sir. Thank Heaven, the breaker has not been injured!" exclaimed the man, who had aided them so effectually, taking it from Raby's shoulder, who poured out some into a cup which he had brought for the purpose. As he did so Raby examined his countenance, which, though haggard and emaciated, he recognised as belonging to an old friend.

"What, Bowse!" he cried. "Is it you? — I am, indeed, glad to find that you have escaped from the pirates, though we find you in a sorry condition enough."

"Ah, Mr Raby, I knew the Ione at once, and glad I am to see you," answered Bowse, filling the cup with water. He was about to carry it to his own mouth, but by a powerful effort he restrained himself, muttering, "There are others want it more than I do."

And he handed it to Linton, pointing to one of the sufferers on the ground. Linton took the cup, and pouring a few drops of brandy into it, gave it to the person indicated.

"What!" he exclaimed, as he did so. "Do I, indeed, see Colonel Gauntlett? Tell me, sir, is Miss Garden here? I need not say how much it will relieve the mind of Captain Fleetwood to know that she is safe."

The colonel groaned as he gave back the cup, saying, —

"Indeed, I know nothing of my poor niece."

In a few minutes a cup of water had been given to each of the persons round the tent, the reviving effect of which was wonderful on even the most

exhausted. Meantime the unhappy wretches on the lower part of the rock were shrieking and gesticulating as before, but instead of looking at the boats they now turned their eyes towards those who were quenching their raging thirst with the supply of water brought by Linton and Raby. At this juncture the dinghy returned, and the men in her succeeded by a coup de main in getting two men off, when by a less forcible manner they would probably have failed. The moment they reached the rock they leaped on it, holding the boat by the painter, and before the Frenchmen were aware they had seized two of them who had jackets to catch hold of, and had hauled them into the boat. A second time the manoeuvre had equal success, and thus six were got off without much trouble. Linton now bethought him of trying to soothe some of them by giving them water, and at last he succeeded in attracting one of them up the rock by holding up a cup of water. The man took it and quaffed it eagerly.

"C'est mieux que le sang," he exclaimed in a hollow voice, followed by a fierce laugh. "More, more, more."

The lieutenant considered that he might give him a little more, and others seeing that their comrade was obtaining that for which they had been longing, came up and held out their hands for the cup, their manner and the unmeaning look of their eyes showing that they were more influenced by the instinct of animals than the sense of men.

By degrees the whole of them came up and obtained a cup of water, and Linton had the satisfaction of seeing that they had become much calmer and more manageable. He, in consequence, thought he might venture down to examine the condition of the still more unfortunate beings who sat by themselves, altogether unconscious of their condition, as well as of those he had seen stretched out at their length near the edge of the rock. Bowse, however, recommended him not to attempt to do so till a greater number of the maniacs had been got off. "If Mr Raby and I, and Mitchell, there," (meaning the colonel's servant, who was the second man who had come to their rescue), "were to accompany you, and it would not be safe for you to go alone, those poor wretches might attack our fortress and murder all in it; and to say the truth, I am afraid you can do very little good to any of them."

Bowse's arguments prevailed, and Linton and Raby set to work to get the people into the dinghy. He found the best way was to give them a little water at a time, and then to promise them more directly they should reach the cutter. In this way several more were got off, the seamen seizing them neck and heels the moment they got near the dinghy, and tumbling them in. At last Linton, leaving Bowse in charge of what he called the fortress, proceeded with Raby and Mitchell, carrying the remainder of the water to aid those who either could not or would not move. The first man they came to lay moaning and pointing to his mouth. No sooner did his parched lips feel the cooling liquid than he sat upright, seizing the cup in both his hands, and drained off the contents. Scarcely had he finished the draught than, uttering a deep sigh, he fell back, and, stretching out his arms, expired. On the next the water had a more happy

effect: the eye, which at first was glazed and fixed, slowly acquired a look of consciousness, the muscles of the face relaxed, and a smile, expressive of gratitude, seemed to flit across the countenance of the sufferer. The next, who was sitting by himself, almost naked, with his feet close to the sea, received the cup with a vacant stare, and dashed the precious liquid on the ground, while the cup itself would have rolled into the sea, had not Raby fortunately saved it. They, however, again tried him with more, and no sooner did the water actually touch his lips than he seemed as eager to obtain it as he was before indifferent to it. When the dinghy returned, these two were lifted into her, and conveyed on board the cutter. The cutter had, by this time, a full cargo on board, which she transferred to the Ione, and then returned, anchoring closer in with the rock than before. While Linton and his companions were attending, as I have described, to the most helpless of the French seamen, they were followed closely by the remainder, who watched their proceedings with idiot wonder.

The threatening gestures of the gang, who were behind, made him glad to find a way by which he could retreat to the summit of the rock, where he found assembled, besides the persons I have already mentioned, the second mate and three British seamen of the Zodiac, as also the captain of a French brig-of-war, which it appeared had been wrecked there, four of his officers and five of his men, who were the only ones who had retained their strength and their senses; and many of them were so weak that they had not sufficient strength to walk down to the boats. Linton accordingly sent for further assistance, and two more hands came off from the cutter, both for the purpose of carrying down the sufferers, and of defending them in the mean time from any attack the maniacs might make on them. Colonel Gauntlett, although at first unable to walk, quickly recovered, and insisted on having no other assistance than such as Mitchell could afford in getting to the boat. The French captain had suffered the most, both from bodily fatigue and mental excitement.

All this party having been embarked, Linton advised that the cutter should return to the ship, and begged that four more hands should be sent him, with a good supply of rope-yarns. While the boats were absent, he tried to calm and conciliate the unhappy beings on the rock; but, although they no longer attempted to injure him, it was evident that they abstained from doing so more from fear than good will.

They were in all, remaining alive, twelve persons; and, when the dinghy returned, he found his party to amount to eight men, with whom he considered he should easily be able to master the others. The unfortunate Frenchmen had not sense to perceive what he was about, and he had captured and bound three before they attempted to escape from him. Then commenced the most extraordinary chase round and round the rock. In a short time three more were bound, and these Linton sent off before he made any further attempt to take the rest. There were still six at large, fierce, powerful men, who evaded every means he could devise to get hold of them without using actual force. He was still unwilling to pull away, and leave them to their fate; at length he ordered

his men to make a simultaneous rush at them, and to endeavour to trip them up, or to knock them over with the flats of their cutlasses. Pour of them were secured, though they had their knives in their hands, and made a desperate resistance; the others, they were two, who appeared to be the maddest of the party, darted from them, and, before they could be stopped, leaped off, on the weather side, when they were quickly swallowed up among the breakers. Linton and his companions shuddered as they left the fatal spot.

The Ione, with her new passengers on board, kept on her course, and the wind still continuing foul, Captain Fleetwood steered for Athens, off which place, the French commander said he was certain to find a ship of his own country to receive him and his crew.

A French frigate was fallen in with, as was expected, and the French captain and his surviving officers and crew were transferred to her. They were all full of the deepest expressions of gratitude for the service which had been rendered them, and all united in complimenting Bowse for his behaviour during the trying time of the shipwreck, which had been the chief means of preserving their lives.

I will not describe Fleetwood's feelings on seeing Colonel Gauntlett, and on hearing that Ada had, to a certainty, been carried off by Zappa. He had been prepared for the account; for he believed, from the first, that it was for that purpose he had attacked the Zodiac.

Such, however, was a conjecture a lover would naturally form, as he considered her the most valuable thing on board; but, perhaps, the more worldly reader may consider that the rich cargo had greater attractions, as well as the prospect of a large sum for her ransom. He was not aware that, at that very time, Zappa had sent to Aaron Bannech, the old Jew of Malta, to negotiate with her friends for that very purpose. The colonel, of course, remained on board to assist in the search for his niece, while Bowse begged that he might be allowed to remain also for the same object, and his men entered on board the Ione, which was some hands short.

A few words must explain the appearance of Captain Bowse and his crew and passengers on the rock. When Zappa had left the Zodiac he had bored holes in her, for the purpose of sending her to the bottom; she, however, did not sink as soon as expected; and Bowse, with some of his people who were unhurt, were able to put a boat to rights, and to launch her. The boat carried them all, and they were making for the nearest coast when they were picked up by a French man-of-war. The French ship was soon after wrecked on a barren rock, on which they existed without food for many days, and where many of the Frenchmen went mad. Here they remained till the Ione took them off.

Fleetwood had been very unhappy at having been compelled to go so much out of his way to get rid of the Frenchmen; but he was well rewarded for the delay, by falling in, when just off the mouth of the Gulf of Egina, with the very brig he had chased before touching at Cephalonia, the Ypsilante. Captain Teodoro Vassilato came on board, and expressed his delight at meeting him

again, insisting on being allowed to accompany him on his search.

"I was once taken prisoner by the rascals myself, and narrowly escaped with my life, and I may have some little expectation of satisfaction in punishing them," he observed. "Indeed, without my assistance, I do not think you have much chance of success."

This last argument prevailed, and Fleetwood, warmly pressing his new friend's hand, assured him of his gratitude for his promised assistance. The two brigs, therefore, sailed in company to search for the pirate's island.

Chapter Twenty Seven.

Captain Fleetwood followed his unknown guide into the open air without a word having been exchanged between them. He felt no fear, and scarcely any doubt as to the object of the summons he had received; for he had, from the first, persuaded himself that it was in some way or other connected with Ada Garden, and that he was either to hear of her, or to be conducted into her presence. The guide stopped at the door of the building to conceal the light, and looked cautiously around to ascertain, apparently, that no unwelcome eyes were near to watch their proceedings. Having convinced himself that he was unobserved, he again beckoned the English officer to advance, leading him round close to the line of ruins, which at one time formed the outer walls of the castle, and the shadow of which now served to aid in concealing them from any person who might; by chance, be crossing the more open ground.

As Fleetwood was passing beneath Nina's tower he looked up at her casement under the vague impression that he should there find her whom he was so eager to meet; but no light was visible, either there or in any part of the building; and he had little time for observation, for his guide led him on with a step so light and rapid that he had to do his best to keep up with him. The night was one of the most perfect with which that eastern clime is blessed. The air though warm was pure and fresh after the storm — the golden stars were shining forth with a brilliant lustre, from the intense blue of the sky, on the dark tranquil sea, which lay in calm majesty at their feet, the gentle hush of its slumbering waves being the only sound to break the tranquil silence of the hour.

It was a night formed for the holy meeting of those whose hearts, though bound together, had long been parted, a night for pure happiness and love. Fleetwood felt its benign influence, and had he before been inclined to despair, it would have reassured him. A moon reduced to a thin crescent was sinking towards the horizon, and casting a bright shining line across the ocean, its light being just sufficient to throw the tall shadows of the towers and ruins along the open ground, and to tinge their summits with a silvery hue.

The guide every now and then stopped and listened, as if apprehensive that some one might be abroad, and interrupt their proceedings; and then hearing nothing, on he went again as rapidly as before; Fleetwood each time imitating his example, and stopping also. He had scarcely before remarked his conductor's appearance; but he now observed, while thus stopping, that his figure was small and light, and that he wore a dark capote, with the hood drawn over his head, so as completely to conceal his features and to envelope his form. They went on till they got close to the tower in which Ada resided, when the guide once more came to a stop, and beckoned Fleetwood to approach.

"Zitto, hush!" said the guide, in the softest Italian. "I have risked much to

serve you, and her you love — my life — and even more than my life — yours also, perhaps — and, therefore be cautious. I can allow you only a short time to say all you long to utter; but remember what might happen were you discovered. I will remain below to watch and warn you of danger, and afterwards to conduct you back to your lodging, as I must lock you in there. No one yet suspects you; but when our chief returns I know not how that may be — therefore be advised by me; what you have to do, do quickly. Now go — a short half-hour is all the time I can allow you."

Fleetwood, as he listened, was certain that he knew the accents of the voice, and that the speaker could be no other than the Signora Nina; but he did not stay to utter empty thanks. He thought he could do that as well on his return, but sprang towards the door, which she opened for him, as she spoke; and again taking the lantern from beneath her cloak showed him some steps by which he might ascend the tower.

"Be cautious," she whispered, seeing that he was about to leap up them at the rate his impatience would have urged him to proceed. "Tread lightly, and speak not loud, lest any one passing may hear you. Now, go."

She held the light to show him the turnings in the stairs. He stepped up two or three at a time, with the light tread of a seaman; and on the summit a door stood open, a bright gleam of light streaming through it. A female figure stood in the centre of the apartment. He would have known her among a thousand. She sprang forward to meet him, and in another instant Ada Garden was clasped in her lover's arms. For some minutes the hearts of both were too full to allow them to speak, and joy such as is experienced but seldom in the life of any, and by many never, was their predominant feeling. How much of the precious time allowed them to be together they had thus spent, I do not know, when Marianna, who had been standing retired in a corner of the room, thought it incumbent on her to make her appearance, and embracing Fleetwood's knees in her delight, she poured out a torrent of thanks to him for his having come to rescue them. However much they might have wished the good little girl anywhere but where she was, her presence was very useful to them, as it sobered Fleetwood down to the things of this world; and reminded him that he had all his plans and arrangements to explain to his mistress, and numerous directions to give her for her guidance. Ada also was recalled to her present position, and as the first ecstasies of her joy subsided, fears for her lover's safety took possession of her mind.

"Oh! Fleetwood," she exclaimed; "you have risked your liberty and your life for my sake; and I fear the treacherous and fierce man who brought me here will wreak his vengeance on your head, when he finds himself disappointed in obtaining a large ransom for me — his object, I expect, in carrying me off."

"But, my sweet Ada, I do not intend to give him the power of so doing," returned Fleetwood. "We have stanch friends to assist us, and our arrangements are excellent, so that provided we are not suspected we have every chance of success."

"I will not then, Fleetwood, damp your generous energy with my own, perhaps too weak, fears," answered Ada. "But I am ready to do whatever you think best."

"That is my own brave girl," said Fleetwood, pressing her to his heart. "We must succeed; and now, Ada, listen to what I have to tell you."

"I will — but first tell me, for I have been undutiful in not asking before, have any tidings been received of my poor uncle, and the brave crew of the Zodiac?"

"Your uncle is safe on board the Ione, and our good friend Bowse is one of the companions of my adventure," replied Fleetwood. "The gallant fellow insisted that, as you had been in a manner under his charge, when you were carried off, it was his duty to come in search of you; and I was too glad to have his assistance."

"Thank Heaven for my uncle's safety! And I trust, Fleetwood, that he has conquered the prejudices he entertained against you since he has been on board your ship," said Ada, smiling. "Indeed, his nature is generous, and I know that he must."

"I trust that he has, dearest," returned Fleetwood. "I have treated him as I believe I should any other person in a similar position; and I may, recollecting that he was your uncle, have shown him more respect and tenderness than I might otherwise have done; but, at all events, he appears well disposed towards me. However, in two days, I hope you will have the means of judging for yourself."

"So soon!" exclaimed Ada. "Is your ship so near?"

"But a few hours' sail from hence; and I would, this very night, have put our plan in execution to carry you away, had we been at liberty; but first, the kindness of the pirate's young wife prevented our examining the harbour and the boats in it; and we afterwards found ourselves locked up in the room allotted us to sleep in. I do not, in consequence, think we are suspected; for it is very natural that the gruff old pirate, who seems to act as lieutenant-governor, or major-domo, of the castle — I scarcely know what to call him — should not think fit to leave a party of strangers at liberty to wander about and examine into the state of his defences. I have now to thank the Signora Nina for the happiness I enjoy of seeing you. But, tell me, Ada, do you think she is to be thoroughly trusted?"

"Poor girl, I believe so," said Ada. "Intentionally, I feel sure she would not betray us, but will do her very utmost to aid us."

Ada did not give the reasons for her confidence. Her maiden modesty made her unwilling to tell her lover that she believed that Nina, besides her wish to do what was right, was also influenced by her anxiety to get her out of her husband's way.

"She has already given proof of her willingness to serve us; but, in her brother I have not the same confidence, and you must be cautious not to let him discover who you are. I may wrong the unhappy youth, for he appears to have

many generous and good qualities — and his devotion to his sister, the original cause of his misfortunes, is extraordinary. However, he, at times, appears to wander in his mind; and, except in a case of urgent necessity, do not trust him; and, if you have occasion to do so, appeal to his generosity and honour, and he is more likely to serve you."

"I will do as you advise, Ada; and I confess that I would rather trust to that beautiful Italian girl, than to the sort of person you describe her brother to be;" said Fleetwood. "But our time is short; and I have not told you one word of our plan. You must know that I was fortunate enough to fall in with a Greek captain, who knows the island, and entertains a laudable hatred for Signor Zappa; and he undertook to pilot us here, either in the Ione, or in any way I proposed; but strongly urged me to employ stratagem to recover you. I accordingly resolved to pretend to be a Maltese seaman, as the character I could best personate, and to be unfortunately wrecked on the island. Once here, I felt sure I should find means to communicate with you; and I then proposed to cut out a boat from the harbour, and to carry you off in her. I directed our pinnace and jollyboat to wait every night just out of sight of land, to the windward of the harbour, with the men well armed, all the time I am here, to assist us should we be followed when escaping. I, at first, intended to have come alone; but my Greek friend first insisted on coming, then so did Bowse, in a manner I could not refuse; and I was glad when a real Maltese volunteered, as he could act as spokesman if necessary. Young Jack Raby also begged very hard to be allowed to accompany me; and, as he can speak Maltese and looks his character, I felt that he would be of great use; as, if it were necessary, while he remained hid away in the bottom of the boat, you might make your escape in his dress. The party I have mentioned left the ship yesterday morning in a mistico I bought for the purpose; and we agreed to pretend to have lost our own ship, and to be endeavouring to find our way back to Malta. Though we wished for a strong breeze to give a plausibility to our being wrecked, we did not bargain for quite so much wind as we had, and we were fortunate in having so good a pilot as the Greek. I have not much hope of getting the mistico off — and scarcely intend to use her if we do — but she will be very useful in turning suspicion aside; and if the pirates think fit to watch us, they will keep their eyes in that direction while we are taking our departure in another. By the by, as I felt sure Marianna would be with you, from the account Bowse gave of having seen you both carried off together, it was arranged that young Raby should pretend to be her brother, that we might the more easily make the necessary arrangements: so the moment he sees her, if they meet by chance, she is to rush into his arms and cover him with kisses. What do you say to the arrangement, Marianna?"

"Me no mind it," answered the little Maltese, laughing. "But, signor, say which the brother is, that me no kiss the wrong person. No do well to have brother who won't say me is his sister."

"He is a little dark fellow, with a face as brown as mine, for we painted from the same pot," said Fleetwood. "But if I know Master Jack Raby well, he will not

leave you long in doubt. He has seen you with Miss Garden, and you will very soon have proof of his fraternal affection, so pray remember to acknowledge him."

"Me take great care to kiss very much," said Marianna, simpering.

"I shall trust to you; but be careful not to recognise any of the rest of us; and now, my sweet Ada, I must bid you farewell. Be prepared to-morrow night for our exploit. Somewhere about midnight I hope to be with you. Put on some dark, close-fitting dress, which is less likely to be seen in the dusk than a light-coloured one; and if you could procure capotes from Signora Nina, such as she now wears, it will be still better. Should we be met by any of the islanders we may be mistaken for their friends. Our present purpose is to escape from the harbour, and to leave the mistico in lieu of the boat we take. Young Raby and I will come up for you and Marianna, while the rest prepare the boat. Once outside, I have little fear of what may happen, for we shall soon be under shelter of the Ione's boats, and they will be a match for all the craft of this place, with the exception of the brig, which they will scarcely think of taking out after us. I must keep the Signora Nina no longer waiting. Again, dearest, farewell!"

They parted as lovers under such circumstances would part; and when he reached the foot of the tower he found that nearly an hour had elapsed since he left the Italian lady.

She had remained outside the tower, under the deep shadow in the angle formed by it and the ruined wall, which ran off towards the other tower.

"I fortunately calculated on your want of punctuality," she whispered. "But delay might be dangerous, so you must hasten back to your dormitory, and breathe not, even to your companions, that you have quitted it this night. They sleep soundly, and will not awake."

"I forgot to watch how time passed, and I thought not it had flown so rapidly by," said Fleetwood. "I should deeply grieve were I to cause you greater risk than you have already run for Ada Garden's sake."

"No harm is yet done," replied Nina. "I took care, thanks to my brother's knowledge of drugs, that all who were likely to interfere should sleep soundly to-night. I tried it as an experiment, that, on another occasion, I might be able to assist you in the same way. Now let us hasten back."

"Stay, lady, for one moment," exclaimed Fleetwood, who had the natural horror of all right-minded Englishmen to the employment of any but open and fair means to obtain even the most important object, and an especial disgust at the thoughts of having drugs used to send his enemies to sleep; though, whether, in that respect he was over particular, we will not stop to discuss; at all events, being very certain that if there was a doubt, he kept on the right side of the question. "Stay," he said; "you risk too much for our sake. Give us but our liberty. Take care that we are not locked up again, as to-night, and we will manage every other arrangement. The means you hint at employing are dangerous; and, I believe, we have no right to use them. I again repeat my

promise, that I will not use force nor injure any one for whom you have regard, unless driven to it by the most dire necessity."

"You act, signor, nobly, according to the dictates of your conscience," answered Nina. "Perhaps you are right, and I will follow your wishes, unless absolutely obliged to encounter force and injustice by stratagem and fraud, the only resource of the weak. It is agreed then. To-morrow I will manage that you and your companions shall be allowed to range at will over the island. I need not counsel you to make use of your time. And now we must delay no longer, or the morning light will be breaking in the sky before I have returned to my tower."

Saying this she hurried back, followed closely by Fleetwood, towards the other part of the ruins. She observed the same precautions as before on approaching the building.

On a sudden she stopped, and drew back close to him, beneath the shade of the wall. A footfall was heard; and he saw that she trembled in every limb. Presently a figure emerged from behind the tower, and stood, for some minutes, gazing up in the sky, as if contemplating the glorious galaxy of stars, which shone down from it. At length it advanced towards the spot where they were standing, and Fleetwood felt that they were about to be discovered, and prepared for the emergency.

"I must save this poor girl at every cost," he thought. "Whatever be her motive, she has placed herself in peril on my account."

Just as the person came close to them, he turned round, evidently not observing them, and walked forward in the very direction from whence they had come.

As soon as he was out of sight, Fleetwood heard the Italian lady whisper, — "It is poor Paolo. He would rather aid than betray us; but, for his sake, while I have other means, I would not willingly employ him. He has suffered much for me, and I would not bring further vengeance on his head. Now go in and sleep till the morning."

The door was carefully closed, and Fleetwood heard it locked after he entered the room, where his companions slept soundly.

Nina, mean time, hurried back to her tower, where she found little Mila sleeping on her couch. She awoke her with a kiss.

"Your task is nearly over for to-night," she whispered, putting, at the same time, two keys into her hand. "Go, now, and lock me in, and return those keys whence you took them. I am grateful for your zeal, and you shall have your reward. Keep your own counsel as before; and no one will suspect you."

Mila nodded, took up the keys, and slipped noiselessly back to the house tenanted by her grandfather.

Fleetwood tried to follow the example of his friends, but it was not till daylight broke that he closed his eyes in a deep slumber.

"Humph," muttered old Vlacco, as he came into the room in the morning rubbing his eyes. "There was little use locking up these lazy Maltese, unless

they are addicted to walking in their sleep. At all events they are honest, or they would not snore so loudly."

Chapter Twenty Eight.

The greater part of the population of the island residing near the harbour were assembled on the shores of the bay to enjoy, under the shade of the high cliffs, the deliriously cool air of the evening, and to welcome the return of their chief, whose mistico was seen approaching from the westward.

There were old men and women, the elders and parents, as well as the young men and maidens, who had come with happy hearts, to amuse themselves with various light sports, but chiefly to dance their favourite Romaika, which has been handed down to them from the earliest days of their heroic ancestors, when it was known under the more classic name of the Cretan or Doedalian dance.

Century after century has seen it danced by the youths and maidens of successive generations, on the self-same spots — always the most beautiful in the neighbourhood — both on the islands and on the main, since the time when Greece was young and strong — the fit cradle of the arts and sciences; when that literature was produced which will last as long as the world exists; when those temples arose, and those statues came forth from their native rock, which subsequent ages have never been able to equal; when all that the human mind could conceive most elegant had its birth; when her ships traversed all known seas, and her colonies went forth to civilise the earth; when her sages gave laws to the world, and a handful of her sons were sufficient to drive back thousands upon thousands of the vaunted armies of the East; from those glorious epochs to the time when, sunk in effeminacy and vice, despising the wisdom of her ancestors, she fell under the sway of the most savage of the tribes she had once despised — yet still, in abject slavery, while all that man cared for was destroyed, the sports of their youth were not forgotten; and what was learned in youth, the parents taught their children to revive, as their only consolation in their misery and degradation.

Thus, Homer's description of the dance in his days would answer perfectly, even to the very costume, for that danced in a remote island of the Archipelago: —

"A figure dance succeeds:
A comely band
Of youths and maidens, bounding hand-in-hand;
The maids in soft cymars of linen drest;
The youths all graceful in the glossy waistcoat.

"Now all at once they rise — at once descend,
With well-taught feet, now shaped in oblique ways,
Confusedly regular, the moving maze:

Now forth, at once, too swift for sight they spring,
And undistinguish'd blend the flying ring.
So whirls a wheel in giddy circle tost,
And rapid as it runs the single spokes are lost."

Among the spectators was Nina, and after much persuasion she had induced Ada Garden to accompany her, with Marianna. Ada had done so after due consideration, from believing that it would be better to appear as much as possible at her ease; and by meeting the strangers, without appearing in any way to recognise them, or to take interest in them, to disarm any suspicions she thought it probable old Vlacco might entertain.

The veteran pirate had at first grumbled at allowing her to leave her tower; but Nina silenced him by asserting that, during her lord's absence, she had the chief command; and that if he would not obey, she would complain of his cruelty and tyranny, and declare that he was no better than a Turk.

Marianna was delighted at once more finding herself looking at a crowd, and sadly wanted to go and join the dancers, though her mistress would not allow her to do so; and even Ada herself felt her spirits rise under the genial influence of others' happiness. She forgot that the handsome, spirited youths she saw before her were beings brought up to become robbers and murderers; and that the lovely maidens she gazed on were taught to consider such deeds as justifiable and praiseworthy. She saw in them, for the moment, only the descendants of the ancient Greeks; and in form and feature, and even in dress, how slight the change. Alas! that their own indolence and effeminacy should have reduced them so low that they should become the slaves of despots, and thus have all the vices inherent in a state of slavery. Nina and Ada did not venture down into the bay among the crowd, but stood apart on a ledge, raised some thirty or forty feet above the sands, at the entrance of the ravine, where they could overlook the whole scene. The old fishermen and their wives were seated in groups, either on the rocks under the cliffs, or on seats formed of the spars and planks of the boats ranged along the sands. The youths wore their gayest sashes, and their red fezzes set jauntily on one side; and the maids their best cymars, with their beautiful hair adorned with garlands of wild flowers, in rich profusion, streaming down their backs.

Many of the girls were very lovely, with tall, graceful figures, and their hair of auburn hue, which is as much prized now as of yore. The music was primitive, consisting of pipes, such as Pan might have played on, and stringed instruments like the guitar or violin. The musicians were in appearance like the bards of old, ancient men, with white locks and flowing beards; but they appeared, nevertheless, to reap as much pleasure from the scene as the rest.

They had just begun to play as Nina and Ada reached the spot, and the dancers had formed in line to commence their amusement. A pretty and graceful girl, with a chaplet composed of flowers and shells, the spoils of the sea and land, and a garland of the same nature hung like a scarf across her shoulders, led off the dance; a handsome youth, with one hand holding hers,

and the other another girl's, came next, and so a chain was formed of alternately a young man and a maiden. At first the leader advanced with a slow and seemingly sedate pace, all following, in a measured time, to the musician's solemn strain. By degrees, as the music became more lively and animated, so did the movement of the dancers increase in rapidity. First, the foremost girl led her chain of dancers along the smooth sand at a rapid rate; then she suddenly turned, and setting to her partner, flew off, and darted under the upraised arms of those at the furthest extremity, dragging the rest after her; then she twisted among the rocks, on the shore, and when weary of that movement, joined her hand to that of the youth at the other end, and commenced circling round and round at as rapid a rate as the feet of the dancers could more. When all were panting and dizzy, suddenly she broke the circle, and led off again in a line towards the sea, till she reached the very brink, where the sparkling wavelets washed the shining pebbles and many-tinted shells; and watching till the water receded, she darted after it, and flew back before it caught her; though many who were in honour bound to follow her, in vain hurried their steps before the returning wave overtook them, amid the shouts of laughter of their more fortunate companions. Nothing would, however, induce them to break the indissoluble chain. Then she led them smiling and shaking their heads as they went in review before their older friends, who were seated as spectators, and the rest expected they were thus to visit all the groups; off again she darted to chase the retreating wave, and then once more to join hands in the lively wheel, and at last, overcome with their exertion, they sank on the sands exhausted, though they quickly again sprang up to renew their sport. Several other similar sets were formed at the same time; one of which, composed of the younger people, was led by little Mila; nor was it the least lively or joyous of them all.

Ada Garden looked anxiously around to discover whether Fleetwood and his companions were there, and she soon perceived him and several other persons in the costume of Maltese seamen, mixed among a number of the islanders, who considered themselves too old to dance and too young to sit quiet as spectators. Fleetwood descried her; he was afraid almost to look towards her, lest any one might suspect him. Jack Raby was near him, and he whispered to him to be prepared, should the people they were with move in that direction, to recognise Marianna, and to rush up to where she was standing. Ada watched them as they moved from place to place, now talking with some of the old people, now with others, till at last they reached a group below her. The moment was not lost. Master Jack uttered an admirable imitation of a cry of joy, and commenced scrambling directly up the cliff, in a way only a midshipman or a monkey can scramble, towards Marianna. She also played her part exceedingly well. She shrieked with joy, and bent over the cliffs, exclaiming in Maltese, —

"My dear brother, my dear brother, where have you come from? Oh, I am so delighted to see you!"

Jack answered in return with his choicest gibberish, which did perfectly well

to express all the sentiments of fraternal affection he was at that moment experiencing; indeed, no one could have understood him had he spoken Maltese, and few were listening even to what was said, they were all too much occupied either with watching the dance, or the approach of their chief's mistico, which was now seen just at the opening of the mouth of the bay, and adding not a little to the picturesque beauty of the scene. Raby had no little difficulty in getting up the cliff — he had chosen so steep a place — and he was very nearly slipping all the way down again, just as he had reached the edge of the ledge, but all served to show the ardour of his affection. By a desperate effort he sprang up and rushed into Marianna's arms, and she had no reason to complain of his neglecting the promise his captain had made for him; and to do Marianna full justice, she played the part of an affectionate sister to admiration. No one would have suspected that they were not delighted to meet after a long separation, and yet they had never, to their knowledge, seen each other till that moment.

"Oh, my sister, I am so delighted to see you," exclaimed Raby. "And now, Miss Garden, pray listen to me," and he gave Marianna another kiss and a hug. "The captain has fixed on a boat to run off with, and we shall easily be able to launch her, and will have her ready near those rocks to the left there exactly at midnight, when he and I will be waiting for you under your tower. He wants to know if that old rascal of a pirate locks you up every night as he did us. Pretend to be speaking to my sister here."

Marianna got another kiss. Perhaps, in that respect, Master Raby rather overdid his part; but he was a young actor, and as his captain had ordered him to do so, he was not to blame.

"I fear so," answered Ada. "Lady Nina will give him the key."

"If not, we must go the whole hog, as the Yankees say, and pick the lock, or we shall have to lower you out of the window. We are not going to be stopped by anything. You must prepare a line of some sort to haul up a rope by, which we will bring in case of necessity. No one will suspect us; for we have been working away at the mistico all day, and she isn't off yet; in fact, we took care she shouldn't be, for there is every prospect of a calm, and a pulling-boat will answer our purpose much better. The pirates, if they trouble their heads about us, think we are going to try and get away in the mistico; though my belief is, they don't intend to let us; and I should not be at all surprised but what they'll go this evening and rip off a few planks, or bore holes in her bottom, to prevent our escaping, lest we should betray the position of this island. However, Miss Garden, be of good cheer, whatever our skipper — I beg pardon, Captain Fleetwood — undertakes is sure to be right in the end."

"Tell your captain, Mr Raby, that I will be prepared," whispered Ada, looking away from where he was standing. "Tell him, that I have no fear for myself; but do try and caution him to be careful of himself; and allow me also to thank you for your generous zeal in my service, and to entreat you to be cautious."

"Oh, as for me, Miss Garden, I like the fun of the business," replied the

midshipman bluntly. "I would do anything, too, to serve the captain; and as for him, he's never rash, and you must not think that he, or any of us, wouldn't gladly risk ten times the danger we now run to serve you. So now I must be off again, to tell my companions that I have found my sister. There, Miss Marianna, I think I've kissed you as much as the most affectionate of brothers would be expected to do — I'll give you a few more when I come back."

And away sprang the light-hearted youth down the hill, and, getting back to his companions, he appeared to be pointing out to them his newly-found sister, and to be expressing, with animated gestures, his delight at the discovery.

"It's all right, sir," he whispered to his captain; "Miss Garden isn't a bit afraid, and will have a line ready to haul up a rope to her window, if she cannot get out any other way. What shall I do now, sir?"

"Go back to your sister and try and learn where the chief pirate has been, and gain any other information which may be useful," replied Fleetwood. "Perhaps you will be allowed to remain altogether with her, and if you can, do so; for you will be of the greatest service in assisting Miss Garden to escape from the tower."

"With all my heart, sir. Would it be proper to give Miss Smaitch any more kisses? It seems to please her," said the midshipman, with apparent innocence, just as he was running off.

"Perfectly unnecessary, I should think," replied Fleetwood, almost laughing at the mid's pretended simplicity, which, having held the same irresponsible rank himself, he could fully appreciate. "You may overact your part."

"No fear, sir — I'll be decorous in the extreme, and if you don't see me again, suppose all goes right; I'll get shut up in Miss Garden's tower, if I possibly can."

He did not wait for further directions, but scrambled up the cliff again to where Marianna was standing, who, supposing that she was to receive him as before, threw her arms round his neck and paid him off in his own coin.

Nina, whether she believed in the relationship or not, took good care to explain to the bystanders that the Maltese attendant had found a brother among the shipwrecked crew of the mistico, and it all seemed so natural, that no one doubted the statement. Even old Vlacco, who was generally so wide awake that, in his own opinion, no one could take him in, was completely deceived, and threw no difficulties in the way of Jack Raby's accompanying Ada to the tower, when Nina requested that the brother and sister might not be parted.

As Jack was very small for his age, he looked much younger than he really was, and the old pirate, considering him a mere child, thought he could do no harm, at all events; and should it be necessary to cut the throats of the rest of the party, to ensure their not escaping, it might be as well to save him, to make him a servant to the English lady. This circumstance was of great advantage to Ada, as the lively conversation of the young midshipman, whose buoyancy of spirit nothing could damp, served to divert her mind from dwelling on the

dangers of the attempt about to be made to rescue her; and she was also able to learn from him many of the events with which the reader is acquainted but of which she had hitherto, of course, remained in ignorance.

While what we have been describing took place, the Zoe was drawing rapidly in with the land. The breeze was fair to carry her close to the harbour's mouth, and then, having sufficient way on her, down came her two tapering lateen sails, and she glided up to her well-known anchorage. She was instantly surrounded with boats full of people, anxious to know what adventures she had met with during her brief cruise, and how she had weathered the storm the previous day. They soon came back, and it was speedily noised abroad that some event of importance had occurred, and much bustle and discussion took place in consequence. Two wounded men were conveyed on shore to their own cottages, or rather huts, and messengers were forthwith despatched in search of Signor Paolo, to bring him to attend on them, for he was nowhere to be found among the crowd on the shores of the bay.

Zappa himself was next seen to step into his boat, when the musicians began to play their most lively airs, the dancers to dance their best, and those who had firearms, to discharge them in his honour; the sharp report, for they were all loaded with ball, echoing from cliff to cliff around the bay. He stepped on shore with a brow less calm and a smile less sweet than usual, and returned the salutations of his followers in a manner less courteous than his wont, as he hurried on towards the entrance of the ravine leading up to his abode. He stopped short on his way, for his eye fell on Nina and Ada standing close together, and talking like two friends long acquainted. He was much puzzled. He had only been absent two days, and he was not aware that either of them knew of the other's existence; though as it was no longer important, according to his present policy, to keep them apart, the meeting did not matter; and he little knew how soon similarity of misfortune makes brothers and sisters of us all. He looked up, and made a bow to them as he passed; but he paid them no further attention, and taking Vlacco's arm, he led him up the ravine.

Poor Nina's heart sank within her. It was the first time he had treated her with cold neglect and indifference. Ada Garden saw also that something was wrong: she had observed the two wounded men landed from the mistico, and she remarked the angry brow of the pirate; so she came to the conclusion that he had been defeated in some skirmish or other, and that, very probably, he was expecting the island to be attacked by the Turks, as had been the case with others, when most of the population had been put to the sword. She mentioned her fears to Jack Raby.

"I don't think it's anything very bad, for the young pirates and piratesses are still dancing away as merrily as before," he answered. "But I'll soon know all about it."

And once more he rejoined his friends, and exchanging a few words with them, ran back to Marianna.

"It's a warmer matter than I thought; but still there is nothing to be alarmed

about, Miss Garden," he said, as soon as he had recovered his breath. "The Greek officer, who is with us, hears from the people that their chief had the impudence to go on board an English brig-of-war — that he was pursued by her boats, and very nearly captured. I wish to goodness he had been — but nothing more is known on the subject. There is no doubt he has visited the Ione, and I only hope he has got no inkling of what she is there for, and what we are about. If he has, you see, why that is only a still greater reason for not letting the grass grow under our feet."

The news brought by the midshipman of course alarmed Ada very much, as she saw all the dreadful consequences which would too probably ensue, should Zappa discover who he had in his power. He had the reputation of being treacherous, vindictive, and cruel; and he was not likely to grow merciful towards men who had ventured into his island in disguise, for the purpose, he would naturally suspect, not only of rescuing her, but of observing his means of defence, in order afterwards to attack him.

The evening was drawing to a close — the dancers had grown weary, and the elders had begun to retire to their homes; so Ada gladly acceded to Nina's wish to turn their steps up the ravine.

They parted at the foot of Nina's tower; and, as Ada bade her new friend farewell — as she believed, for the last time — her heart bled for her unhappy position and too probable fate. Ada hurried to her tower, followed by Jack Raby and Marianna, fearful of meeting with the pirate, lest he should stop to question the young midshipman; but, luckily, he did not appear; and as soon as they reached her chamber, they set themselves to work to prepare for their flight.

Chapter Twenty Nine.

Captain Fleetwood and his companions had carefully kept out of the way of Zappa when they saw him land, lest, by any unfortunate chance, he should recognise them; and, when they heard of the expedition on which he had been engaged, they had reason to rejoice that they had taken this precaution. As soon as the islanders had returned to their homes to feast and make merry, and to indulge in the juice of the grape — which, on such occasions, is the great resource of the men, as it was in the days of their ancestors — they set themselves down on the rocks to consult as to their future proceedings, taking care that no eavesdropper was within hearing to discover that they were not talking Maltese. They were well aware that the risk they ran was much increased by the pirate's knowledge that the Ione was in the vicinity — for it was natural he should suspect that she was there with some design against him, even though he might not have gained any information respecting their expedition. They hesitated, therefore, about returning to the castle; and the Greek, Captain Vassilato, gave it as his opinion, that it would be more prudent to seek for food in the village, and to pretend to be anxious to procure lodgings for the night; that instead, however, of entering any house, they should, as soon as the inhabitants were retiring to rest, slip out and return to the bay; and that, while they were engaged in getting the boat ready, Captain Fleetwood should go up to the tower and bring down Miss Garden.

"We could not have selected a better night for our attempt," he observed; "for, fortunately for us, the greater portion, if not the whole, of the male population will be drunk, and are not likely to interfere with us. Had it not been for this, we might have found much difficulty in getting away unperceived out of the bay."

"What is your opinion, Mr Bowse?" said Fleetwood.

"I am inclined to agree with Captain Vassilato," answered Bowse, "who seems to know the habits of the people, unless you have any reason to offer against it."

"I should prefer facing the lion in his den; or, hearing that there are strangers in the island, he may suspect, and send for us, if we avoid him. Besides, I fear we may have difficulty in enabling Miss Garden to escape from the tower; and I should wish to visit the mistico to procure a rope and block to lower her, if necessary, from the window. The bay is not more than two miles from the tower, and it will excite less suspicion if we are seen going there, as if with the intention of sleeping on board the mistico; and the old pirate knows, perfectly well, that we cannot get her off without his assistance. I propose that we remain on board the mistico till an hour before midnight, and while you go on to prepare the boat, I will remain to assist Miss Garden in escaping from the tower, and we will then follow directly after you."

"Well, sir, I think your plan is the safest and best, because we shall then be independent of everybody," said Bowse. "It will be somewhat more fatiguing, perhaps, for it will give us a long walk over very rough ground; but that is not a matter to be thought of with the object we have in view. But, by Heavens, sir! here comes that rascally old pirate, and I should not be surprised if his object is to tell us that we must all go and be locked up again, as we were yesterday night, and then we are regularly done for, I fear."

As Bowse spoke, old Vlacco was seen at the mouth of the ravine, at least, as well as they could distinguish in the dark, whence he began descending the rocks to the sands.

"I trust that, even if we are locked up, everything is not lost," said Fleetwood. "At all events, he is coming towards us, and it is our best policy to exhibit no unwillingness to accompany him if he desires it."

The others agreed that such was certainly their only resource; and directly afterwards old Vlacco came up to them.

"I have been directed by our chief to desire the presence of you Maltese, forthwith, at the castle. He wishes to examine you as to certain things, about which you can give him information, and if you satisfy him, he will probably allow you to depart hence to-morrow. Tell this to your comrades," he said, looking at Captain Vassilato, who forthwith translated it into English, carefully making the words sound as much like Maltese as possible.

"We will gladly give him any information in our power," returned the Greek captain. "We were contemplating paying our respects to him; and if you lead on, we will follow you."

"Humph," muttered Vlacco, as he began to climb the ravine, "the fellow gives a ready answer, and I suspect we have got the wrong sow by the ear." Or at least he made use of an equally elegant expression answering to the above in the Romaic.

"We must adhere firmly to our story," said Captain Vassilato, as they followed the pirate. "But I wonder whether, among his other accomplishments, our friend Zappa understands Maltese; if so, you, Pietro, must act as spokesman, and remember, the more dull and stupid you appear, the better. If, however, we find he does not, I must continue to play the interpreter. It will be dangerous, however, to speak English in his presence, for depend upon it he knows the sound of the language too well to be deceived."

"Your caution is very important," observed Fleetwood. "Mr Bowse and I will keep in the back ground, and be silent; and do you, Pietro, put yourself forward, and answer all questions put to us, if he speaks your native tongue; but if he talks Greek, Captain Vassilato will do so."

It would be absurd to say that the whole party did not feel the full danger of their position; but they were brave men, and had strung up their nerves to encounter whatever might happen; the expected interview they saw would prove as critical as any part of their adventure, and they were accordingly proportionately anxious for the result. It was, fortunately, perfectly dark by the

time they reached the summit of the cliff, and old Vlacco led them to the building they had inhabited on the previous night.

"There, go in, and I will inform our chief that you are come," he said, pointing to their room. "In the mean time, some supper, I suppose, won't come amiss; and if he should not wish to see you this evening, the eating it will do to pass the time till you go to sleep."

They were agreeably surprised to see little Mila and an old woman, who had before attended on them, enter with a supply of provisions, to which they did as much justice as they were able, and while they were discussing them, Vlacco returned.

"Well, I told our chief that I believed you were as honest as most men, and I don't think he'll trouble himself about you till to-morrow," he observed, as he sat down at the table, and helped himself to a cup of wine. "Let me tell you, if you were the rogues he first thought you might be, he would have sent every one of you flying over the cliffs, without the slightest ceremony."

The old pirate seemed in a facetious mood, and laughed, and drank, and talked, in a way very different to what appeared to be his usual habit; but it struck his guests that it was assumed to throw them off their guard, and that he was eyeing them all the time, much in the way that a hungry cat does a trapful of mice, which she knows will shortly be thrown to her to torment. After some time, he took his departure, and they heard him lock and bolt the doors behind him. There they were, then, once more prisoners, at the very moment it was all important to them to be free.

Fleetwood at first was in hopes that the Signora Nina might come to liberate them; but he then recollected that, her lord being returned, she would scarcely be able to escape from the tower without being observed; and felt that they must depend on their own exertions to free themselves. To open the door was out of the question, so they commenced operations by examining the window. A small lamp had been left there, which they had not on the previous night, and Pietro observed that Mila had placed it on the table, at the moment her grandfather's back had been turned to quit the room, and he suspected that she had done so by the direction of the Italian lady.

The window was a mere aperture in the highest part of the building; but it was secured with strong iron bars, so firmly fixed in the wall, that they soon found it would be impossible to remove them without files or tools to work with. They next tried the roof. On examination, they saw that it was very rudely put together, and that a great part of it was formed simply of the rough planks torn from the sides of a vessel — probably some unfortunate craft cast on their shore, or brought there as a prize. This they judged would be easily removed, if they could raise a scaffolding to work from.

"Before we do anything, let us put a screen before the window, lest any one from without should observe our proceedings," said Fleetwood, who was the chief suggester of what should be done, though his companions were not behind-hand in conceiving as well as executing the details of their plan.

They waited for upwards of an hour, till they hoped old Vlacco would be fast asleep; occupying themselves meantime in cutting up a small wooden bench into wedges and levers, to rip open the boards. They then hung a cloak across the window, and placed the table against the wall which they calculated formed the outer side of the building. On it, they piled two empty casks, which were ordinarily used as seats, and thus, with the remaining bench, they were able, without difficulty, to reach the ceiling. This platform was only sufficiently large to allow two to work at a time; so while Captain Fleetwood and Bowse mounted on it, the other two held it firm, and handed up the wedges and cross bars they had manufactured. As they were, of course, afraid to make any noise by hammering in the wedges, they first worked away with their knives, till they had formed grooves to insert the edge of several; they then placed the ends of the handspikes against them, and pressing those with all their force, they had the satisfaction of seeing that the planking began to separate. They persevered in their efforts, and the planks being fortunately old and rotten, and exceedingly dry, from the heat of summer, the nails easily drew out, and they were soon able to insert their cross bars. They had begun making the hole in the roof, some little way from the wall, and it was fortunate they had done so. In a quarter of an hour they had removed enough of the planking to enable Fleetwood to draw himself through, when he found that heavy stones were placed on the outer edges to keep them down on the wall, and that they had had a narrow escape of their coming tumbling through upon their heads; or of having sent them crashing over, with a loud noise, on the ground on the outside. As it was, a quantity of rubbish had fallen through, and they found that the whole roof was covered with it, and that they had by chances selected the spot where it lay the thinnest.

Bowse followed Captain Fleetwood to the roof, and they then assisted their Greek friend and Pietro to ascend, after the latter had extinguished the light, replaced the table bench and casks as before, and swept the rubbish under the straw. As he was a light, active man, by stretching down their hands as he stood on one of the casks, they were able to drag him through on the roof. They then carefully closed down the planking, and swept some rubbish over it, so that it would require a little examination, to discover by what means they had made their escape.

So far, they were once more in the open air and at liberty to proceed, if they could reach the ground. The night was like the previous one, with a clear sky and the stars shining brightly, while the moon had become much too small to give more light than just sufficient to enable them to find their way.

The hazard now was to descend without making a noise, for the night was so serene that the slightest sound would, they feared, be heard; though the distance did not appear more than an active man could leap without danger. But the walls were broken and crumbling, and it was difficult to find a spot on which they could depend, to take their last hold of before dropping off. After proceeding a few paces to the right, however, the wall appeared more even.

"Now, my friends," whispered Fleetwood, "I will lead the way, and try the depth — the ground below seems free from stone — and, by grasping the ends of your handkerchiefs, I may fall without the fear of breaking my legs."

On this, the other three, as proposed, formed a rope with their handkerchiefs; and all of them leaning over the wall.

Fleetwood threw himself off; and, grasping the handkerchiefs, lowered himself till he reached the end, and then dropped. The fall was considerably greater than he expected — for the ground sloped away on that side of the ruin, in a manner on which they had not calculated; and he had great reason to congratulate himself on the precaution he had taken. The other two adventurers insisted on Bowse, who was the heaviest man of the party, following next. He could now better judge of the depth; and Fleetwood, having rolled away all the loose stones, he fell without injury. The Greek came next, and was caught in the arms of his companions; and Pietro, in like manner, dropped down, the rest saving him as he fell. This feat accomplished, they all breathed more freely; and crouching down on the ground to avoid being seen, they listened attentively to ascertain if any one was moving, before they again put themselves in motion. Not a sound disturbed the silence of the night; and, satisfied that they were not discovered, they crept cautiously on towards the eastward, under the shadow of the wall, in the manner Nina had led Fleetwood on the previous night. It still wanted an hour and a half to the time he had desired Ada to be prepared; and he resolved to employ the interval in ascertaining whether the door of her tower was locked; and, if he found it so, to proceed to the mistico, and procure the cordage which might be required. Leaving his companions, therefore, seated on the ground, in a sheltered rock, he walked to the tower alone.

He first looked carefully on every side; and, having ascertained that no one was near, he approached the door. It was locked — as he feared it might be — and, after the most minute examination, he could discover no means by which he could open it. He then went under the window, and, in vain, tried to attract the attention of the inmates. They were, apparently, too busily employed within. At last, he threw up some small stones, and after numerous efforts, one entered the casement.

"Who's there?" said a voice, which he recognised as Raby's.

"Ione" replied the captain, in a loud whisper.

"Is it you, sir?" exclaimed the midshipman, to whom the answer was familiar. "I'll be down at the door directly."

And Fleetwood heard him hurriedly descending the steps.

"You are much sooner than we expected, sir," said the lad through the chinks of the door. "Can you open the door from the outside?"

"No; can you open it from within?" asked Fleetwood on return.

"No, sir," said the midshipman; "I tried for a whole hour to pick the lock, but could not do it; so I have fitted a chair, strengthened with some ropes which came with Miss Garden's baggage, and there will be no more difficulty in

getting down from the tower than from the deck of a frigate."

"You have done admirably," replied Fleetwood. "I will not stop to thank you, — but tell Miss Garden everything is going on well — and I will return in an hour."

The adventurers had some difficulty in picking their way among the rocks to the little bay where the mistico lay on the sand; but they succeeded in reaching it without encountering any one; and, as they had discovered the means of descending to it in the morning by the secret path I mentioned, leading through the cavern, they easily got down. They found that the vessel had not been disturbed — indeed, old Vlacco, having claimed her for their chief, no one would have ventured to take anything from her. They were thus not only able to procure the rope and blocks, but to provide themselves with some arms they had stowed away where they had not been discovered; and some provisions which, should they miss the Ione's boats, might be very important. Although, from the peculiar rig of the mistico, her halyards were too short to be of any service, and her sheets too thick, a coil of small rope was found of sufficient length for the purpose; and, loaded with their treasures, they bade farewell to the little craft which had served them in such good stead.

"I should like to burn her, to prevent the rascals benefiting by her," said Captain Vassilato, as they walked along the sand to the entrance of the cave. "But, as the so doing would probably betray us to them, we must leave her to them as a gift; and may she drown some of them before they have done with her."

"I would rather we could catch her again with a few of them in her," observed Bowse. "I never like to wish an enemy worse luck than a good thrashing, if I can meet him in fair fight; but, to be sure, from what we hear of these fellows, they don't deserve much mercy from civilised men, though we have no reason to complain of the way they have treated us."

"Stay till they discover what we are about, and they would cut our throats without ceremony," replied Captain Vassilato. "We shall do wisely not to trust them."

Fleetwood walked on ahead without speaking. His mind was too much occupied with the importance of the undertaking, and the risk to her he loved, to allow him to enter into conversation; and, indeed, he wished his friends would be silent, for, though it was not probable any of the islanders were within hearing, it was possible that some one might be out, and they might betray themselves. The same thing struck them at last, and they followed in silence. The most difficult part of the journey was where they had to mount the rude steps cut in the cliff, and where the slightest slip might have proved fatal. They, however, reached the open door in safety, and then proceeded more briskly on their way. Wherever they could, they kept as much as possible under shelter; but they had several open spaces to pass, where they could not avoid exposing themselves to view; though, as there were no habitations in the neighbourhood, they did not fear any danger from this circumstance.

Any one who has been engaged in an undertaking, on which not only their own life and safety depends, but also that of others, and among them of one dearer than life itself, will understand the feelings which animated Fleetwood's bosom, as the most difficult and dangerous part of the work was about to be accomplished. The happiness, the pride, the joy unspeakable which would be his, should he succeed in placing her in safety, urged him dauntlessly on; at the same time the thought of what would be the result of failure made him grave and serious; his own speedy death, but that he set at naught; her misery and continued captivity, and, perhaps, even a fate too horrible for him to contemplate; and he did not forget that he had companions also, who had generously risked their lives to assist him, and that they also would be involved in his destruction. Fortunately the difficulties of the road, the necessity of looking out for the best path among the rocks, and of watching for the approach of any person who might interrupt them, prevented him from dwelling so deeply on the subject as to unfit him for the work.

His heart beat quick as he approached the tower; and, wringing his friends' hands as they hurried on to prepare the boat they had fixed on, he remained under Ada's window with the coil of rope, promising to follow, as soon as possible, with Miss Garden and her companions. Jack Raby was on the watch, and appeared at the window as he got under it. So well had the midshipman arranged everything, that not a word was spoken. He let a line down, which he had made by unstranding a piece of rope, and twisting up some bits of the carpet; and, though composed of so many materials, it was sufficiently strong for the purpose; and with it he hauled up the end of the rope and the block through which it was to run. The block he at once, with a sailor's quickness, securely fastened on to the iron bar; and, reeving the rope through it, he fastened one end to the chair he had arranged, and then, putting the chair out of the window, he jumped into it, holding on by the other part of the rope, and lowered himself down to Fleetwood's feet.

"All right, sir," he whispered. "I thought it better to try the length of the rope and the strength of my chair, before we trusted Miss Garden in it. She is in capital heart, sir, and so is my new sister. Now, sir, if you will stand by the end, I'll go up again to help her into the chair, and bear it off the wall. I can't ask you to haul me up, sir."

"No, no, jump in, my lad, and be careful, in Heaven's name, that you secure Miss Garden properly," said Fleetwood, pressing his hand; and he quickly hauled him up again to the window, and the chair once more appeared, with Ada seated in it, a shawl thrown round her, in true man-of-war fashion. Raby had taken care to have everything properly prepared.

"Now, sir, lower away gently, if you please," he whispered, as he leaned out of the window; and Ada Garden safely descended into Fleetwood's arms. A silent embrace was all he would allow himself, before he hauled up the chair to lower down Marianna, who accomplished the transit with the same speed as her mistress. Jack Raby did not immediately descend, but, hauling up the rope, he

cast off the block, and then passed the rope over the bar, and descended by it.

"I won't delay you a moment, Captain Fleetwood," he said. "But I am determined the pirates shall not find out how we escaped, and, as there is a cliff close here, which overhangs the sea, I will, with your leave, heave the chair, and rope, and block, over it, and they will never discover them there; or if they do, they will think that we got over the cliffs."

As Fleetwood considered the delay would not be of consequence, and that no harm could arise from allowing the midshipman to have his way, he gave him leave to do as he proposed, and in two minutes he returned, having accomplished his object.

"There, sir," he said, laughing quietly. "If the pirates miss one of the chairs, they may look for it long enough before they find it or the rope, and in the mean time they will fancy English young ladies can jump forty feet to the ground without hurting themselves. When they try to open the door, too, they'll think we are inside, for I barricadoed it with everything I could find, and there'll be a pretty smash when they shove it open."

"You have done admirably, and now take Marianna's arm, and follow me," said Fleetwood, leading the way with Ada.

When Ada Garden found herself once more by Fleetwood's side, she returned her grateful thanks to Heaven for having thus restored her to liberty; for so strong was her confidence in her lover's courage and judgment, that she felt as if all difficulty and danger were over, and that success must await them.

Fleetwood also uttered a silent thanksgiving to Heaven, and a prayer for protection during the still greater danger he knew they must encounter in their endeavour to get out of the harbour; but, of course, he did not tell her this. Neither spoke; they both were confident of the sentiments of each other's heart, and Ada felt it would be useless at that moment to express her gratitude, when she hoped to prove it during the remainder of her life; and he in like manner knew that there would be no necessity to tell her of his love and joy at finding her, when his acts were giving her such convincing evidence of it. They walked on under the shadow of the wall, as noiselessly and rapidly as they could move, towards the commencement of the steep path leading down the ravine. In doing so they had to pass close to Nina's tower. Fleetwood looked up; no light was seen streaming from the casement, nor was any one heard stirring within.

On they went, and, Fleetwood tenderly supporting Ada, they commenced descending the path. They had got about a quarter of the way down, when Fleetwood fancied he heard the sound of a distant footfall. Could it be the echo of their own feet? he thought, then made a sign to Raby to stop while they listened. There could be no mistake about it. Footsteps were rapidly approaching, and, on looking back, they saw, to their dismay, a dark figure on the cliff above them. Fleetwood drew back under the shadow of an overhanging rock, and he could feel Ada, who had also seen the figure, as she clung closer to his arm, tremble with alarm, which she in vain endeavoured to overcome.

Marianna uttered a faint shriek, and was going to repeat it, when Jack Raby gave her a pinch, which effectually recalled her to her senses, and, in a whisper, he threatened to give her another if she made the slightest noise. A minute or two of the most intense anxiety passed away, which, under the circumstances, appeared nearly an hour, and no one appeared.

"If we emerge from where we are, we cannot escape being seen, should the person remain where he was," replied Fleetwood. "It will be better to confront him boldly, and learn his intention in following us, than to allow him to go back and to give information of our attempt. I will leave you, Ada, in charge of Mr Raby, and will return instantly."

"Oh, do not quit me!" exclaimed Ada. "I will go with you — indeed, I am not alarmed for myself; but I know not what may happen to you. They may kill you, Fleetwood — oh, do not go."

"It is absolutely necessary that something should be done, dearest, and there is no greater danger to be feared in going than remaining," answered Fleetwood. "Ada, I must force myself from you — it must be done."

"You are right, Charles, I was weak. Go, and I will remain as you wish," she whispered, relinquishing his arm, and he sprang up the path.

Jack did his best to comfort Ada, by assuring her that his captain could easily manage to thrash a dozen Greeks, and that he was not likely to suffer any harm from a single pirate, at all events. Every moment Ada expected to hear the noise of a struggle, a pistol-shot, or the clash of swords. She listened with breathless eagerness, trembling in every limb, and she would have followed her lover, had she not known that her so doing would be against his wish, and could be of no advantage to him, but might cause great harm. It appeared to her an age since he left her, and her anxiety became almost too great to be borne.

"Oh, Mr Raby, cannot you go up and see what has become of Captain Fleetwood? Some accident has happened to him, I am certain," she whispered to the midshipman.

"I must obey orders, Miss Garden, and wait for the captain's return," was the answer, in the same low tone. "You need not be alarmed, I can assure you — he has not been gone two minutes."

He had scarcely spoken when Ada's quick ear caught the sound of footsteps, and she could scarcely restrain her cry of joy, as she sprang forward to meet him. He placed his arm tenderly round her to support her, as he led her on.

"It is very extraordinary," he said; "I could find no one, though I searched the very spot where I had seen him standing. But, come on, dearest, we have time to reach the boat, and to get outside the harbour before the spy, if such he was, can send people to pursue us."

"I am able to walk much faster," said Ada, hastening her steps, "I dread any delay in this dreadful place."

They had not, however, proceeded many paces, when, on turning one of the many angles of the winding path, a person, the same, they fancied, whom they had before seen, appeared suddenly before them, and laid a hand on

Fleetwood's arm.

"Stay, signor," he said in a low, deep voice, speaking in the Italian language. "You are already suspected by one who knows not mercy, and if he were to discover your wild attempt to carry off that lady, your death would be the consequence. Return and abandon it; for ere you can get beyond the sound of the waves, as they dash on the cliffs below, you will be pursued and overtaken."

"I know not who you are, signor," said Fleetwood; "but, as I believe your warning is given in kindness, I thank you. To follow your advice is impossible, and I must beg you, as a favour, not to detain us — I need not ask you, I trust, not to betray us."

"I feel sure that Signor Montifalcone will not do so," exclaimed Ada, recognising at once the voice of the young Italian. "He will rather exert himself to assist us — I am not mistaken in his generosity."

Paolo was silent a minute, when, releasing his grasp of Fleetwood's arm, he sighed as if his heart would break, and took Ada's hand. "Lady," he said, in a tone of deep melancholy, "you sign my death-warrant; but it shall not prevent me from obeying your wishes. I will accompany you to your boat, if you have one prepared, and, when you have gone, I will endeavour to deceive those who attempt to follow you. Further, I know not how to aid you."

"We are grateful to you for your promised aid," said Fleetwood; "and now, lead on, we can ill afford further delay."

"It is for the lady's sake I act," muttered Paolo, beginning to move onward down the path.

Ada overheard him. "It is because you are generous, and would preserve the lives of others, even though you risk your own," she said, in a low tone, touching his arm. "But if there is danger in remaining here, come with us. You can be conveyed in safety to your native country, and can ascertain if your father yet lives."

"What! and leave my unhappy sister to her fate?" said the young man, turning round his countenance towards her, which, even with the faint light afforded by the moon, she observed wore an expression of the deepest grief. "I have but one object to live for, — for her sake alone I consent to endure existence. Do not ask me to quit her."

"Oh that she would have come too," said Ada. "She might yet be saved."

"She would not accompany you, lady," answered Paolo. "Pirate though he is, Zappa is still her husband, and no power would now make her quit him. But I delay you, and increase the risk of discovery, already sufficiently great, by speaking. I will say no more, but that I pray, when in safety in your native land, you will not forget the unhappy exile whom once you knew, and who would gladly have died to serve you."

He spoke as they walked on, and a few minutes more brought them to the mouth of the ravine, whence a full view of the moonlit bay lay before them.

The Sea Hawk and two misticos were at their anchors. No light appeared on board either of them, nor was there any one moving, that Fleetwood could

discover, on their decks; nor was the slightest noise heard, except the low, gentle ripple of the untiring water on the sands; yet so smooth and glass-like was the sea, that every star in the heavens seemed reflected on its surface. He could distinguish, also, the dark boats drawn up on the beach; but he looked in vain for the one his friends were to secure, in which to make their escape.

"They have, with due caution, carefully concealed her," he said to himself. "When we get more to the left, we shall doubtlessly see her."

On descending to the sands, they turned, therefore, sharp round to the left under the cliffs, which, it must be remembered, was the direction of the spot agreed on where the boat was to be in readiness. At length they reached the black rock, alongside of which Fleetwood expected to find her, and, to his great satisfaction, he saw that she was there; and his friends directly after rose from her bottom, where they had concealed themselves while waiting for his coming.

"We were alarmed for your safety, Captain Fleetwood," said Bowse, leaping out to meet them. "We waited so long for you; but everything is in readiness. If you will assist Miss Garden on board, I will take care of Marianna. But who is this stranger with you?"

"One to whom I owe much," said Ada, stretching out her hand. "Farewell, Signor Montifalcone, may Heaven reward you for what you have done for me."

"Farewell, lady, and may you never know the grief I am doomed to bear," returned the Italian; and before Fleetwood, who would have thanked him, could speak, he had retired to a distance; and as they quickly embarked, and urged the boat from the shore, they could see him standing watching them, still as a marble statue.

Chapter Thirty.

"Thank Heaven, you are so far safe, dearest," said Fleetwood, as he placed Ada in the stern sheets of the boat, by the side of Jack Raby, who, it was arranged, should steer, while he took the stroke oar, his companions pulling the others.

With heartfelt gratitude did Ada thank Heaven, for having thus far conducted them in safety through the perils which surrounded them, and implored protection for herself, and for the gallant men, her deliverers, through those they had still to encounter.

They had well employed the time spent in waiting, by carefully muffling the oars, so that they should make no noise as they worked in the rullocks, and it was now only necessary to take care to let the blades fall into the water, and to draw them out again with as little splash as possible.

Marianna sat opposite to her mistress; and if not the most delighted of the party at the success which had hitherto attended them, she, at all events, gave more vehement expression to her feelings; and Raby had to apply his former remedy to keep her quiet.

At a sign from Fleetwood, the boat was sent gliding off from the rock; but instead of at once steering out into the bay, she was kept close in shore, under the shadow of the cliffs: the blades of the oars just clearing the sand as they went along.

The boat was a very rough specimen of naval architecture, and wore they to have depended on her speed, the chance of escape would have been small indeed. She was built to pull six oars, with a high bow and stern, and though well suited to serve as a fishing-boat, or to live in the short seas of the Archipelago, was not intended to be used when rapid progress was important. The adventurers had, indeed, selected her, not on account of the qualities she possessed adapted for their purpose, but because she happened to be moored close into the shore, near the east side of the bay, and, what was very important, had her oars left on board her. Pietro, who was a good swimmer, had, it appeared, gone off with his knife in his mouth, and cutting her cable, towed her close enough in for the other two to step into her. They had then brought her round, with the same cautious silence, to where Fleetwood had found her.

The hearts of all beat quick with hope, not unmixed, however, with apprehension, as the boat glided along the shore close to the cliffs.

Fleetwood's glance was roving watchfully round, to notice the first sign of their being discovered, and of any preparations made for their pursuit. The figure of the unhappy Paolo Montifalcone was the only one discernible, as he stood at the end of the rock, to catch a last glimpse of the faint outline of her on whom he had so devotedly set the affection of his ardent nature, without a

prospect of return, and his figure soon faded away in the obscurity.

From the shore, the adventurers had now, they thought, less cause to fear; but they looked with suspicious eyes towards the brig, and the two misticos, on the decks of which, at least, one person ought to have been on the watch; but neither of them gave any signs of having life on board.

"If we had suspected the sort of watch there rascals keep, we should have had little difficulty in taking them by surprise," thought Fleetwood. "We may profit by our knowledge on another occasion, but I am afraid they will not forget the lesson I hope we shall give them, to be more vigilant in future."

Of course, it is difficult to describe the sensations which alternately filled Ada's bosom, as the boat progressed round the harbour; hope, joy, gratitude, love, and fear, all were there; and those who would understand what they were, must either have been placed in a similar position, or must endeavour to fancy themselves so placed. At length the eastern point of the harbour was passed, and with the towering cliffs of the entrance rising above them on either side, the clear boundless sea appeared ahead. Jack Raby, with the natural impulse of his age, forgetting his own lessons to Marianna, was very nearly giving way to a shout of joy as he found the boat floating freely on the ocean he had learned to love and to confide in; but he recollected himself in time, and merely uttered a whispered "hurra," which could not have been heard above the splash of the water on the rocks close above them.

"Port your helm, Raby, and let us shut out the bay as fast as we can," whispered his captain. "We shall still keep under the shadow of the cliffs for a short distance, to avoid the risk of being seen from the eastern towers. That will do, steady.

"Keep up your courage, my sweet Ada, for a few minutes more," he said, turning his eyes to her countenance, from which, indeed, his glance had never been absent longer than was necessary to watch for their safety. "We may now congratulate ourselves on having every chance of escape. In less than half an hour we shall fall in with the Ione's boats, and then we may defy the whole nest of pirates to stop us."

"I shall have no further fear when we have lost sight of that dreadful vessel, which looks even now like some slumbering monster about to awake and rush after us," she answered, pointing to the Sea Hawk, which lay still open inside the harbour's mouth.

She had scarcely uttered these words when a loud shout was heard, which seemed to proceed from some one on board her, and a musket was discharged at them. The shouting was repeated, and words were clearly distinguished.

"We are discovered," exclaimed the Greek captain. "Pull, pull, as hard as we can, the watch on deck is calling on us to come into the harbour. He has evidently just woke up, and is yet uncertain what we are, though he suspects us. He threatens to fire the guns at us if we do not obey him, and that will have the effect, though we escape the shot, of waking up the rascals in all quarters, and we shall have a whole fleet of boats after us: stay, I will hail in return, and

pretend we are fishermen."

On this he stood boldly up in the boat, and cried out in Romaic, at the top of his voice —

"What fool is that on board the Sea Hawk, who has been sleeping on his watch these four hours past, and now makes so much noise, because others more industrious get up early in the morning to follow their avocations? We should have little fish to eat if we were to trust to you for the supply."

"Who is it?" exclaimed the same voice. "Is it you, Balbo?"

"Yes, yes," answered Captain Vassilato; "I should have thought you would have known my voice."

"Who is it?" hailed another person, apparently on shore.

"Gerasimo Listi," answered the watch on the Sea Hawk's deck.

"No, no, the old fellow lies drunk at home!" exclaimed the second speaker. "Treachery, treachery. They are the spies endeavouring to escape."

"It is hopeless to deceive them," said Captain Vassilato, when he heard these words, which he translated to his companions as he resumed his seat and oar. "We must pull for our lives; we have a good start, and it may be some time before any boats' crews can be collected to pursue us."

It is needless to say with what energy all hands bent to their oars — concealment was of no further use, and they were able to put their whole strength into their strokes. There was no time to be lost. The brig was swinging with her broadside across the mouth of the harbour, and as soon as those on her deck could procure matches, they rushed to the guns, and discharged them in quick succession; and Ada could scarcely restrain a shriek of terror as she saw their bright flashes lighting up the mouth of the harbour — the sides and rigging of the vessel now crowded with people — and heard their loud report echoing among the cliffs, as also the rushing noise of the shot as they came flying by — some over their heads, some close astern, and others ahead of them; for though the pirates' aim was very uncertain, yet, as from the narrow entrance of the bay, the only shot which could reach them must come between the cliffs, they could not go far distant from them. One or two, apparently, from the peculiar noise they made, hit the cliffs, and rebounded back into the bay. Marianna, whose fears had completely overcome her, crouched down at the bottom of the boat, where she thought she should be more secure; and Fleetwood entreated Ada in that respect to follow her example, desiring Jack Raby to place her as low down as possible, where a shot was less likely to strike the boat. Though she was unwilling to be more sheltered from danger than he was, yet she saw that her so doing would relieve him from some of his fear for her safety, and she complied with his wishes; reclining on some jackets and cloaks which Jack Raby spread out for her, she saw no more of what took place, though the noise of the firing soon ceasing told her that they had shut in the brig by the western cliffs.

"Remain where you are, dearest," said Fleetwood, as she was about to rise. "We may still have some shot sent after us, when the boats, which will probably

pursue us, get outside; and though, with the start we have, they are not likely to take good aim, a fatal one may come on board; and think, Ada, of how little use would be the risk we have run, if you were to be the victim. But do not be alarmed; no enemy has yet approached."

I do not know if I have explained clearly the position of the boat: she was at this time about an eighth of a mile from the lofty cliffs which formed the western side of the bay, with her head to the west, going at the rate of between four and five knots an hour, which was the utmost speed with which, with all their exertions, they could urge her through the water. The cleft in the rock, as now the entrance of the harbour appeared to be, was seen over their starboard quarter, and in that direction their eyes were anxiously turned for the appearance of the boats they fully expected would follow them. A new danger also appeared from a quarter they had not expected, for along the summit of the cliffs, as seen against the bright blue sky, they could discern some figures running at full speed, and they were not left long in doubt as to their intentions. The persons halted, and the bright barrels of their guns gleamed in the moonlight, as they brought them to their shoulders and fired. Several balls flew by them, and one struck the gunnel of the boat, though, fortunately, no other damage was done. The pirates kept shouting out their threats of vengeance, and firing away, apparently to intimidate the fugitives, little understanding the character of the people with whom they had to deal.

Here, of course, Ada was exposed to as much danger as the rest; and though Fleetwood would have joyfully interposed his own person to preserve her, it was impossible for him to do so, and all he could do was to entreat her to remain down as much as possible under the seat, and to redouble his efforts at the oar.

"We shall soon be beyond the range of those fellows' guns!" he exclaimed. "But ah, there's a boat's bow creeping out from between the rocks. We've a good start of her, however. Give way, gentlemen. We'll lead her a long chase, and find her a warm reception at the end of it, I hope."

"She's not alone, though!" exclaimed Bowse, whose eyesight was remarkably keen. "There's another close astern of her, and, by heaven, there's another just rounding the point. We shall have enough of them to look after us, at all events."

"It matters little how many, provided we keep ahead of the leading one," said Captain Fleetwood, in a cheerful tone, not as much for the object of encouraging his rude companions, as for the sake of keeping up Ada's spirits. "I don't think any of them are likely to pull much faster than we do."

These remarks were made slowly and at intervals, and perhaps even fewer words were really used, as any one who has pulled a heavy oar, for life and death, will know the utter impossibility of carrying on an unbroken conversation, as I have written it down.

They had by this time nearly doubled the distance they were from the shore when the first boat was seen, and had thus gained the best part of half a mile from the harbour's mouth. The nearest of the pirate's boats was rather more

than a quarter of a mile off, which in a stern chase, with slow-pulling boats, was a considerable distance.

The other boats they would not have seen at that distance, had not, as they pulled out, a gleam of moonshine fallen on their bows, and tinged their foaming wake with a line of gold, as they rounded the point before they could stand to the westward in pursuit. The night remained as calm and beautiful as at first, and the moon, though still young, afforded sufficient light to enable the pursuers and pursued to distinguish each other, as they urged their boats through the water.

Fleetwood's arrangements had been as follows: Provided the weather was sufficiently moderate, in Mr Saltwell's opinion, with whom all authority rested, to permit him to venture to sea, with safety, in an open boat, he was to get under-weigh, in the Ione every evening; to stand in till within sight of the island, and to send the boats on with all hands, well armed, to within about two miles of the island, due west of the harbour, or much nearer if the night should prove dark; but they were especially to avoid any risk of being seen from the island. As morning dawned they were to retire gradually, keeping a bright look-out for him, and they were then to return on board, and the Ione was to stand back to her anchorage.

As the night was decidedly bright, Fleetwood did not expect to find the boats nearer than within the distance he had fixed on, and they had then a mile and a half at least to sail before they could come up with them; but he hoped that the firing would have attracted their attention, and that, suspecting its true cause, they would have pulled closer in. Raby stood up as he steered, to peer into the darkness, but no sign could be seen of the wished-for boats.

"May I hail, sir?" he asked. "The pirates will only think that we are laughing at them, and perhaps some of those with Mr Linton may know my voice."

"Yes, hail if you like; but we are still too far off for them to hear you," said Fleetwood.

On this, Jack Raby, putting his hand to his mouth, gave a long shrill cry, which might have been heard a mile off; and it must have made the pirates think that one of them was wounded; but no answering hail was given.

The pirates' boats, though so suddenly manned, were pulled well, and were decidedly overhauling the fugitives. Fleetwood remarked it, but he said nothing. He still hoped that as the distance was short between them, and when they might not only obtain assistance, but retaliate on the enemy, they might gain it before they were overtaken.

"It's surprising that the pirates in the boats don't fire on us," observed Bowse. "They must see us clearly enough to take good aim at this distance. I suspect they have no fire-arms with them."

"Depend on it, they are not without them," replied Captain Vassilato. "His rifle was the first thing every man snatched up, as he left his hut and sprang on deck to jump into his boat. No, no, they make sure of coming up to us, and anticipate too much satisfaction in cutting our throats, to throw away a shot on

us."

"They would be less chary of their powder if they knew how short a distance our friends are from us," said Fleetwood.

It occurred to him, also, that probably Zappa himself was on board one of the boats, and that he would not fire for fear of injuring Ada; for, judging from his own feelings, he had from the first, thought, and justly too, that the pirate was influenced to carry her off, more by his admiration of her than for the sake of her ransom, and this caused him still more anguish, when he saw the probability of her again falling into his power.

"I think there is a slight air springing up from the eastward, sir," said Jack Raby, as he sat down again to steer. "I wish we had a sail to drive her on faster."

"I fear, indeed, that there is a breeze getting up," said Fleetwood, in a tone which ill concealed the apprehensions he felt. "The other boats, however, may not have sails. They must all have come off in a great hurry."

"I see something which has a sail, though," exclaimed Bowse. "The rascals have towed out one of their cursed misticos, and we shall have her after us presently. I see her white canvas, even now, gleaming in the moon-light. She does not feel the breeze yet, for there is a little northerly in it, and the cliffs becalm her."

"I fear you are right, Bowse," said Fleetwood. "I have just now, also, caught a glimpse of her; but the breeze is still very light, and will not send her faster through the water than the boats can pull, so we need not fear her, I hope. It convinces me, also, that the boats have no sails; but that they believe we have, and might, if the wind increases, get away from them. Courage, my friends, we must not despair."

"We may give them a tough job to take us, sir, even if they come up with us," exclaimed the young midshipman, glancing over the boats, which were clearly overhauling them. "There are five of us," — he reckoned himself a man in strength, as he was in courage — "and, with arms in our hands, we may thrash a few dozen rascally pirates, any day. But it may be as well to sing out again, and let our friends know our whereabouts."

He jumped up as he said this, and shouted at the top of his voice; but no hail was heard in return; and it now became too probable that, owing to the calm which had prevailed all day, the Ione had been delayed, and that her boats had not reached their station; for, otherwise, as Fleetwood suggested, they would most certainly have pulled towards them directly they heard the guns of the Sea Hawk. Again and again Jack Raby hailed, with the same result; and it now became very certain that they must not depend on the speedy assistance of their friends. To say that Fleetwood's heart sank within him, as this circumstance became evident, would be wrong; at the same time that he saw clearly the very great danger to which he and those with him were exposed.

"That they have refrained from firing shows that they will not injure Ada; and when she tells the pirate that a large ransom is ready to be paid for her, he will send her, unharmed, on board the Ione; and, for ourselves, we must sell our

lives dearly, as brave men should do."

He thought this, as he saw the leading Greek boat rapidly gaining on them, and now little more than two-thirds the distance she had been before; while they had pulled rather more than a mile from the shore, which now rose dim and frowning astern of them. At the same rate they might thus pull two additional miles before they were overtaken; but then it was utterly impossible that their strength would enable them to continue urging the boat through the water at the same speed they had hitherto been doing. Could they indeed do so, it would be, they soon saw, to little purpose, for every instant the breeze increased, and the mistico was already up to the sternmost boats. They now saw that she had her sweeps out, as well as her canvas set — which, of course, still further lessened their chances of escape.

"I fear the knaves will have the best of it, sir," exclaimed Bowse, incautiously, forgetting the effect his observation might have upon Ada. "But, never fear, sir, we'll fight it out as long as we've hands to move. I'm sure Captain Vassilato and Mr Raby will, and I'll answer for Pietro and myself."

"Thanks — thanks — my friends; I fear it must come to that," said Fleetwood. "Raby, have you got the muskets ready? We will give them a few shot, to show that we do not intend to yield, and at the same time the report may be heard by our friends."

"Yes, sir; there are three muskets here," replied the midshipman. "I suppose they are loaded."

"Oh, never fear; Captain Vassilato and I examined them after we got down to the boat, and we loaded them on board the mistico," said Bowse. "Take a steady aim when you fire, sir. If you can but hit one or two of the men at the oars, it will throw them into great confusion."

"Shall I fire, sir?" asked Jack of his captain.

"No, wait till they get nearer; we must not throw a shot away," was the answer.

Ada had heard, with the most intense anxiety, all the observations which had been made, and she could resist speaking no longer, which she did, in a voice weak and trembling with agitation and alarm.

"Oh, Fleetwood, I implore you, do not, for my sake, resist," she said. "The pirates must inevitably overpower us, from what I hear; and you can do no good by fighting, but will certainly sacrifice your own life and that of your friends. Yield, without striking a blow, and they will not injure you; and you will surely find another opportunity to escape, while I must bear my lot as I best can. For myself I have no fears."

"Ada, it is not death I fear; but the thought of losing you almost unmans me," exclaimed Fleetwood. "And even if I felt, which I do not, that my life would be safe, were I again in the pirate's power, I could not yield without fighting, nor would those with me, I am sure. I know all you feel, my beloved Ada; but were we this moment to cease pulling, and to allow the pirates to come alongside, it would but hasten our fate."

Ada saw that further remonstrance would be useless, and relying, as she justly did, on Captain Fleetwood's discretion and judgment, and feeling he was acting for the best, she said nothing, but waited in silence and dread the coming contest. Poor little Marianna, though her fate was less cruel than that of her mistress, as a short captivity was all she had to fear, was not the less alarmed, and lay at the bottom of the boat, giving way to her fears in floods of tears without attempting to rise.

The first boat approached within three cables' length of that of the fugitives.

"Now, Raby, fire, and aim steadily," exclaimed Fleetwood.

The midshipman, leaving the helm for an instant, took one of the muskets: and resting it on the stern of the boat, fired. A loud cry succeeded the report, and the boat's progress was evidently stopped.

"You have hit one of them," said Fleetwood. "Now, load your piece and fire again. If you can hit another, it will throw them into further confusion."

Jack Raby eagerly did as he was desired, and taking his aim in the most deliberate manner, another pirate was either killed or wounded. The effect was to make her drop so much astern that the second boat took the lead of her.

Jack again loaded his piece. He looked up at the star of which he had been steering, just touching the tiller with his arm, to bring the boat, which had gone off half a point, back to her proper course; and then turning round, and half kneeling on the seat, he fired with the same deliberate coolness as before. The bullet struck the boat, but no one appeared to be wounded, for on she came faster than ever. He loaded and fired again, with the same want of effect; a third shot, however, told on the body of one of the pirates, in the after part of the boat, but his place was instantly taken by another; though the delay allowed the boat which had so long led to come almost abreast of her; and they now, to Fleetwood's grief, came up together, one pulling for each quarter.

"Load once more, Raby, and pass two of the muskets forward," he exclaimed. "As they hook on, we will all fire together, two on each side; then, with our pistols, shoot those who are attempting to grapple the boat, and trust to our cutlasses for the rest. The moment we can free ourselves we will again take to our oars; and I hope we may give them such a taste of our quality, that the rest may not wish to molest us."

"We'll do our best," was the unanimous cry, for all saw that Fleetwood's proposal, however desperate, was the only one to afford them the chance of escape. It would have been as great folly to have trusted to the mercy of pirates, such as they were, as it is to confide in the honour or fair dealing of grasping, money-loving rogues on shore, more especially of those who fancy that they have the protection of the laws to shelter them, while they carry out their nefarious projects. The two leading boats were close to them, while the others were some way astern, with the mistico, which was bringing up the breeze, nearly abreast of the latter.

"Now," exclaimed Fleetwood, throwing in his oar, and seizing a musket, as the bows of the two boats came up with their counter, "fire."

The order was obeyed, and a man in each boat was seen to fall, but it did not check them, and they dashed alongside. The gallant adventurers drew their pistols, and fired them with equally good aim, for two more of their opponents fell wounded; and then grasping their cutlasses used them with such effect, that for some minutes their assailants were kept at bay, without either of themselves receiving a wound. Suddenly, in the midst of the clashing of swords and the cries of the combatants, Jack Raby jumped up on the seat at the risk of being cut down by the enemy; and, while he was still using his sword with one liana, he put the other to his mouth, and shouted out at the top of His voice —

"Ione — ahoy — ahoy! I thought so, I thought so," he exclaimed, as a faint hail came across the waters. "I thought I heard their hail before we fired."

On hearing this, Fleetwood and the rest simultaneously joined in the cry of —

"Ione — ahoy — ahoy!"

If, however, it had the effect of letting their friends know where they were, it also made the pirates see the necessity of finishing the affair without delay, if they would secure their prize. A tall figure had been seen standing in the after part of one of the boats. He now sprang forward, and crossed his blade with Fleetwood, who at once recognised him as Zappa. Both were good swordsmen, but the pirate had greater size and strength, and his arm was, besides, untired, while Fleetwood could scarcely wield his weapon. Zappa shouted to his men.

"Beware!" cried the Greek captain, who knew what was said.

The pirates from both boats made a simultaneous rush; a third came up at the same time. A blow, he could not parry, struck Fleetwood down, senseless, into the bottom of the boat; and at the same moment his companions fell desperately wounded, except Jack Raby, who found his sword whirled into the sea, and himself lifted, by main force, into one of the boats, with Pietro in his company. As Fleetwood tottered on receiving his wound, Ada Garden uttered a shriek of terror, but before her fears overpowered her she mustered her energies for the occasion, and endeavoured, as she knelt at the bottom of the boat, to prevent him from receiving any further injury as he fell. Regardless of the noise and confusion around, she raised his head on the cloaks, on which she had been reclining; she endeavoured to stanch the blood flowing from a deep wound in his head; she called on his name, in accents of anguish, to revive and speak to her, but in vain — no answer could he give. She observed not what was taking place, scarcely that his companions were taken away; that other men filled their places, and that the boat was being urged rapidly back towards the shore, by six fresh and powerful oarsmen. Meantime the mistico had come up, and now hauled her wind with her head to the northward, so that her guns might cover the retreat of the pirate boats; but as soon as they got in order, and began to move towards the harbour, she let draw her head sails, went about, and stood in the same direction, none of the pirates having the slightest intention of coming in contact with the British, if they could avoid it; for they also, it afterwards appeared, had heard the hail of the Tone's boats, and rightly guessed from

whence it came. The crews of the British boats gave way with a will; for, finding that all the firing had ceased, and that their hail was no longer answered, they began to suspect the truth, and that their friends had been overtaken and captured. Linton, it must be remembered, could not tell to a certainty what had taken place, and he therefore acted to the best of his judgment. He ordered the boats to accompany him, pulling as fast as they could, in the direction in which they had seen the firing; but they had come clearly in sight of the lofty cliffs of the island before they perceived the mistico standing in for the land, and a fleet of boats near her, just distinguishable through the gloom. The tables were now reversed, and it was this time the smaller force chasing the larger one; but even had there been twice the number of boats, Linton would not have hesitated to chase them. The British crews, as they found that they were in sight of the enemy, gave forth three of those hearty cheers which they can seldom resist uttering in moments of excitement, and, with redoubled energy, dashed after the retreating boats.

That cheer was heard by those of the captives who still retained their consciousness, and though it showed them that they were not deserted by their friends, it made the pirates still more eager to return to their strong-hold, to avoid encountering an enemy so evidently in good spirits and courage.

The mistico sailed well; but, as the wind stood, it was evident that she would be obliged to make one tack, if not more, before she could fetch the harbour, and this gave the British a hope that they should at all events be able to cut her off; and Linton doubted whether it would not be better first to get hold of as many of the boats as they could, and then to wait for her off the mouth of the harbour.

"I think the boats have got the captain, and the rest of them, on board, by the way they pull," shouted Linton, to Tompion, who commanded the cutter. "Tackle them first, and we may pay the other rascals off afterwards. Huzza, my men — give way, or they will be into their den before we can get alongside them."

"The mistico has tacked," shouted Tompion, in return. "Shall I fire into her?"

"No — no; no firing — we may be hitting our friends," cried Linton. "Let her go — we can get her afterwards."

As the boats drew near her, the mistico opened a fire of small arms and swivels on them over the larboard side; for she was now standing directly across their course, bringing them, as she got more to the northward, under her stern; so that when she again tacked, she would be able to bring her starboard broadside to bear on them. The pirate boats also commenced a slight and uncertain fire, showing that very few of them had arms; but, as they drew near the shore, the cliffs appeared fringed with a blaze of fire, which opened down upon them.

Still undaunted, Linton pushed on: the boats were occasionally hit, but no one was wounded. The mistico again tacked; but she found the wind more scant

than she had probably expected, and she consequently fell off, and instead of having the English boats on her starboard side, she passed astern of them, unable to fire, so close were both parties together, without an equal chance of injuring her own friends. The same cause also prevented the people on the cliffs from keeping up the hot fire they might otherwise have done; for in the darkness of night it was difficult to distinguish the position of the English boats, in consequence of their carefully abstaining from firing. Linton and his followers were almost up with the sternmost of the pirate boats when the lofty cliffs opened, as it seemed, by magic — the enemy disappeared in the narrow opening, and, as they were boldly pushing after them, they found a thick chain drawn across the passage, and at the same time a blaze of fire opened from the broadside of the brig, moored across it.

"Back your larboard oars, pull up your starboard oars, my men," shouted Linton. "We are in a trap — must give it up, or be knocked to pieces, I'm afraid. Let all the boats pull to the south-west as fast as they can till we are out of the range of their guns."

It was, indeed, time for the British to retire; for besides the big guns and swivels of the brig, every accessible point of the cliffs above their head appeared covered with musketry, and several heavy pieces sent forth their messengers of destruction from beneath the walls of the castle. Never were boats perhaps exposed to a hotter fire — to penetrate into the harbour was utterly impossible, and the probability of their escaping was small indeed.

"Pull on — pull for your lives, my men," shouted the young lieutenant, as the boats' heads came round, and their crews endeavoured to escape from the showers of round shot and bullets, which dashed the water up on every side of them, wounding several, and sending more than one brave heart to its last account.

"We shall do yet, my men. We'll pay the villains off for this!" he shouted. "Oh, Heaven! They've done for me. Take the helm, Duff, and tell Mr Tompion — "

He spoke in a low tone, and before he finished the sentence he sunk down at the bottom of the boat.

Chapter Thirty One.

"And so, signora, you would show your gratitude for the attention and respect with which I have treated you, by endeavouring to escape from my care, and by bringing your countrymen to attempt my destruction."

These words, uttered in a deep, stern voice, were the first Ada heard with sufficient distinctness to comprehend their meaning, since the termination of the conflict, in which she had seen her lover, over whom she still hung, cast down wounded by her side. The tone and accent told her, too clearly, who was the speaker ere she raised her head, and, looking round, beheld the pirate Zappa, steering the boat. Whether or not it was fancy, she could scarcely tell; but, as she gazed at him through the gloom, his dress appeared disordered, and stained with blood, and his countenance seemed to her to wear an expression even of unusual ferocity. Dread, lest in his savage mood he should wreak his vengeance on Fleetwood, kept her silent.

"Speak, signora," he repeated. "Why have you done this?"

"I have done nothing to injure you, nothing of which you have a right to complain," said Ada, lifting up her head, though still remaining on her knees by Fleetwood's side. "You unjustly deprived me of my liberty, and that I have attempted to regain. Of no other crime towards you can you accuse me."

She said this with as firm a voice as she could command, remembering the effect her courage had had on the pirate, on a former occasion; and she now felt that it was, if possible, of still greater importance to her to retain her presence of mind; not only her own life, but that of Fleetwood; might depend on her behaviour.

"But you are mistaken, signora. I accuse you of instigating some strangers, to whom hospitality had been shown, to run off with the property of my people, and of inducing that unhappy youth, Paolo Montifalcone, treacherously, to assist in your flight," returned the pirate firmly. "I will not, however, barter words with you. If I and my people escape from the attack your countrymen appear about to make on us, I may overlook your crime; but if any of them suffer through your means, you shall not escape my vengeance."

"I am defenceless and in your power," replied Ada. "I repeat that I have not instigated my countrymen to attack you, and if you suffer, it is through no fault of mine. But if you add a cold-blooded murder to your other crimes, you will bring down the vengeance of all civilised nations on your head, as instruments of the God whom you have offended."

"My resolution is fixed, signora. What I do depends on the result of this night's business," said the pirate, in the same stern voice; and, without paying her any further apparent attention, he urged on his people to renewed exertions at their oars.

This conversation took place exactly as the British boats were first

discovered through the darkness, coming up astern; and as they happened to be just there in line, and looming large in the gloom, Zappa could not tell what force was now being brought against him; and it was the belief that he was about to be attacked by overwhelming numbers, before, perhaps, he could get within shelter of the harbour, and make arrangements for his defence, which had stirred up all the devil within him. One of his remarks gave Ada some gleam of comfort, for it made her fancy that the pirate did not suspect that the wounded man at his feet was Captain Fleetwood, the enemy from whom he had most to dread, and she hoped that he still believed him to be simply the Maltese sailor he appeared. Hope, however slight, will, as the light branch keeps a drowning man above the surface of the treacherous waters, support a person amid present distress and difficulty, who would otherwise sink overwhelmed beneath them; and this idea, which had happily occurred to Ada, prevented her giving way to the wretchedness she felt at the failure of her lover's gallant attempt to rescue her, and the too probable destruction he had brought on himself and those associated with him. The pirate every now and then turned his head to watch the advancing boats, expecting them each instant to fire on him; but seeing that they did not do so, he grew calmer as he approached the harbour, knowing that he should soon be in safety within it.

Though trembling lest her care should evince her interest in Fleetwood, Ada, as soon as Zappa's attention had been withdrawn from her, again employed herself in endeavouring to staunch the blood which flowed from his wound. As she bent over him she found he breathed; and as she held his hand in hers, she felt that his pulse was still beating, though slow and faint. It had at last occurred to her, that it would be wiser to call Marianna to her assistance, though, with the natural jealousy of love, she was unwilling that any one but herself should tend, while she was able, the object of her affection, but the poor girl was little in a condition to render her any aid; as, overcome with her fears, and the continued excitement in which she had been kept, she had gone off in a fainting fit, from which she was only just recovering. She heard the voice of her mistress, and it served to revive her, and raising her head, she dragged herself towards her.

"Oh, holy Mary, and is the brave captain killed!" she exclaimed, as she saw Fleetwood's rigid, death-like appearance, though the dark colour with which his skin was tinged concealed the ghastly pallor of his countenance. "Oh, holy mother, is he dead?"

Ada grasped Marianna's arm, to make her keep silent, as she whispered — "He is your countryman, a seaman of Malta. You must attend to him." And she trusted that Zappa had not overheard her maid's indiscreet exclamation. Whether he had or not, his attention was again attracted towards them.

"You appear to take great interest in that wounded man, signora," he observed, in a less angry tone than before.

"I do, signor," she replied, in a firm voice, without waiting for his saying any thing further. "I perform but a woman's part towards a wounded man, in

endeavouring to alleviate his suffering. I do as I would towards any one in a like situation; and as I would towards you, were a shot, from the guns of my countrymen, this instant to lay you low, and were I again carried into captivity by your orders. We are taught by our religion, signor, not to distinguish our enemies from our friends, when they are in affliction." Ada made this last observation as the genuine feeling of her heart, without any hypocrisy, however excusable some might think it, under the circumstances, and, doubtlessly, would have staunched the wounds of her greatest enemy, to the best of her power, had she been called on to do so; though the anxiety and tenderness which animated her, as she watched over Fleetwood, would have, of necessity, been wanting.

"Well, well, signora," returned Zappa. "You and your attendant are welcome to do your best to prevent the man from dying, though he deserves nothing at my hands; but whatever men may say of me, they shall not justly accuse me of being a murderer in cold blood. Your countrymen do not appear to be in a fighting mood. Perhaps they are afraid of firing, lest they should hurt you. Is it not so, lady? I know more of their plans than you suspect. The expedition is led by the captain of the Ione, in person, and he was on the look out for you, when we so inopportunely came up, and spoilt your arrangements."

"Can it be so?" thought Ada. "Is he really ignorant that Fleetwood is close to him? Alas, he may be deceiving me, and if I pretend to agree to his assertions, he will but use it as a weapon against me. The right and best plan is to refuse to give an opinion on the subject."

"I am your prisoner, signor," she said, aloud; "and as such I claim every right to endeavour to escape as I best can. It would therefore be folly in me to acknowledge by what means I have communicated with my countrymen, even if I had done as you suppose, lest you should prevent my doing so another time."

"Per bacco, you are a brave girl!" exclaimed the pirate, in a tone in which Ada felt that admiration was too much mingled with a familiarity she had endeavoured to avoid. "I would rather be your friend than your enemy, if you would let me. Faith, you deserve your liberty, or anything else that you desire; but it would tax my generosity too much to give it to you."

What he said further, Ada did not hear; for the noise of the firing, which then commenced from the cliffs above, as well as from the boats, drowned his words. She trembled for the fate of the Tone's crew, who were coming to her assistance; for she was sufficiently acquainted with the nature of military defences, to know the impracticable character of the harbour into which the pirates, she was afraid, would try to draw them.

The firing increased; and she judged, by the gestures of the Greeks, who were rowing, that her countrymen were close upon them. Again the hope revived that, even then, Fleetwood might be rescued. The shouts of the British seamen rang in her ears. She could scarcely refrain from rising and waving to them to urge them on to the succour of their captain; but, just as she fancied they would be alongside, she saw the cliffs, at the entrance of the harbour,

towering above her, and the boat shooting in; directly after, the Sea Hawk opened her fire, and her ears were deafened with the reverberating reports of the guns, and the shouts and shrieks of the pirates. The moment the boat touched the shore, Zappa and his companions sprang out, he shouting, — "To the castle — to the castle! We will give them the guns as they retreat."

And Ada found herself left alone with Pietro and Marianna. In vain she endeavoured to arouse her lover to a state of consciousness — the same frightful torpor continued which the wound had caused; and her heart almost broke with anguish, as she began to fear he might die before he could receive any proper assistance.

"The pirate talks of his generosity. Would he allow him to be sent on board the Ione with a flag of truce?" she thought. "No, no; it were vain to hope it; and the very entreating him to do so would betray Charles to him."

She then remembered the medical knowledge possessed by Paolo Montifalcone, and the great assistance he had been to her; but she had no means of testing his surgical skill, though she understood that Zappa had, at first, detained him, that he might be useful to any of his followers who were wounded — but then the idea occurred to her — though, perhaps, she did not express it in so many words, — "Can I trust him? He has confessed his unhappy attachment to me. I told him that, if no other circumstance prevented my marrying him, my heart was another's, and can I dare to place that favoured rival in his power? He is, apparently, generous, and possesses many excellent qualities; but he is an Italian; and if the tales I have heard of Italians are true, they are less scrupulous than other persons of ridding themselves of those they hate. Perhaps he would not contemplate such a deed — he might now shudder at the thought of it; but if the temptation were thrown in his way, could he withstand it? I might, were I to trust him, be guilty of my Charles's death, and of causing that unhappy youth to commit a murder. Oh! God help me! What shall I do?"

Just then, some rapid steps were heard of a person running along the sands. They attracted the attention of Marianna, who had begun to recover from her fright; and looking over the side of the boat, she screamed out, — "Is it you, Mr Raby? Oh, come here — come here! We want you very much."

She was right in her supposition; and the next instant the midshipman had sprung into the boat.

"What, Miss Garden! Are you left here alone? And, good heavens! is that the captain?" he exclaimed, in a tone of voice which showed how deeply he felt, joyous and careless as he was on ordinary occasions. "Oh, Miss Garden, he is not dead!"

"I trust in Heaven he is not, Mr Raby," replied Ada. "He has been stunned and severely wounded, and, had no one been with him, would have bled to death; even now, I know not what may happen if he does not speedily receive assistance. Had we the strength to do so, we might convey him up to the tower, where I suppose I shall be again shut up, and his wounds might thus be

properly dressed."

"I am afraid that you, and Marianna, and I, should never be able to carry him all that way without hurting him," returned Jack Raby. "If I could find our companions, we could easily do it; but I don't know what became of them. I was dragged into a boat by myself, and knocked down, and told to be quiet; out, as soon as we got in here, the rascals went off to man their guns, and quite forgot me, I suppose; so, directly I found that they were gone, I felt to see if my head was hurt, and feeling it all right, I jumped out and set off, determined to try and find out what had become of you and the rest. If I could not succeed, I thought about going up to the Italian lady, and getting her to make interest for us all. I was in a great hurry, because I did not know when the pirates might come back; and they will, probably, shut me up somewhere, so that I cannot get to speak to her."

"Your suggestion, Mr Raby, affords much hope that we may obtain assistance for Captain Fleetwood," said Ada. "Oh! hurry up to the tower, and I am certain that the Signora Nina will exert herself to the utmost in our favour. Tell her all that happened — tell her that the life of one very dear to me depends on her sending us aid; and she will find some one who will come and assist to carry your captain to a place of safety. I need scarcely advise you to take every precaution to avoid being stopped on your way."

"Never fear me, Miss Garden," answered the midshipman, as he leaped on shore. "If I hear any one coming near me, I'll stow myself away under the rocks, or climb right up the cliffs over their heads. It's fortunately so dark, that there's very little chance of my being seen, and I'll be back again as fast as I can."

Nina Montifalcone was sitting, solitary and sad, at the window of her tower, gazing out on the sea, and watching the scene enacting below her. She had risen from her couch on hearing the firing and noise, and had gone to where she now was, to learn the cause of it. The rapid discharge of the guns from the brig and fort told her that fighting was going on, and the British boats in full retreat explained what else had happened. So interested was she on what was going on without, that she did not hear the sound of the footsteps of a person who entered the room.

"Signora, signora," said a voice near her; she started on hearing herself addressed, and saw Jack Raby standing at her elbow. "I have come in a great hurry, and have not a moment to spare, to tell you that Signora Garden, your friend, is on the shore of the bay in a boat, and that there is a person very badly wounded in it, who will die if you cannot send him assistance; and also that, if you do not intercede for us with the pira — I mean with the chief of this island, — I and my companions shall, very likely, to-morrow morning, be hung, or shot, or have our throats cut, or be thrown over the cliffs, or, at all events, sent out of the world."

"The Signora Garden, and one in whom she is interested, wounded," repeated Nina. "Ah! I see how it is. Tell me, frankly, boy. Is it the captain of the English brig who is wounded?"

"Signora, si, I will not deny it," said the midshipman. "There is, therefore, you will see, still greater necessity for you to interfere in his favour."

"I tell you, boy, if it were known who he was, and for what purpose he came here, I could not preserve his life for one instant," replied Nina. "He must not be brought up here on any account, for he would be certainly recognised in the morning. Have you met my brother, Signor Paolo. He alone can assist us."

"What, the Italian gentleman? No, signora. I took too much care in coming up here to fall in with anybody," said Jack.

"Then I must go in search of him. We shall probably find him among the spectators of the fight. I will send him down to the boat. Tell the signora that there is a cottage close to the shore on the other side of the bay, to the inhabitants of which my brother has been of great service, by preserving the lives of their children in a dire sickness, and thither the wounded man shall be conveyed. If they have any gratitude in their nature, they will perform any service Paolo may require; and the English captain will be safe with them, even should they discover who he is. Now, hasten back to the bay with the message, and entreat Signora Garden to return to her tower, and to appear to take no further interest in him. It will betray him, to a certainty, if she does, and it can do him no good. I will, however, endeavour to arrange that you shall remain with him to attend on him. Tell her that, as soon as I have dispatched Paolo, I will go myself to meet her."

While Nina was speaking, she took out of a chest the capote she had worn on the previous occasion, and, throwing it over her shoulders, led the way down the steps. While Jack Raby hurried off down the ravine, she took her way towards the edge of the cliffs, where she saw a number of people, some of them still firing in the direction where the boats were supposed to be, though they must by that time have been beyond the range of the guns; it served, however, to occupy their attention, so that no one perceived her. She wandered among them for some time in vain, looking for her brother, till, at last, she found him, leaning against a part of the ruins on a high spot, from where he could overlook the whole scene. Twice she called him, but so absorbed was he in his own thoughts that he did not answer her, till she climbed up over the broken fragments at his feet, and touched his arm.

"Paolo, my brother," she said, "I come to ask you to perform a generous and a noble work, from which you must not shrink. You love the English lady who has been held captive here. I knew it from the first, and I know that she cannot return your love, for her heart is another's. Now listen: the man to whom her heart is given, your rival if you will, lies now in the island, wounded almost to death, and on your skill depends, probably, whether he lives or dies. Promise me, then, as you hope for salvation in another world, for peace of mind in this, to exert that skill to the utmost to preserve his life, to conceal his real character from my husband, and to aid him to escape from the island. Say you will do this, my brother, and I believe, from what I have seen of that fair girl, you are far more likely to win her regard by such conduct, and ultimately, perhaps, even

her love, than were her lover to die without an attempt on your part to save him."

Paolo listened without interrupting her, and did not immediately answer.

"Her love! Do you think it possible that I should gain her love?" he at length exclaimed, as if he had not heard anything else she had said. "I would sacrifice life itself for that bright jewel."

"It would be wrong were I to hold hope out to you to induce you to act as I could wish, Paolo," said Nina. "Think not of any other reward than such as your own heart will afford you. Her love I do not believe that you will attain, even were her lover to die. One of her nature places her heart on one object, and when that is torn from her, it never again finds a resting-place. All you may expect, and that, be assured, she will give you, is her gratitude and esteem. With that you must be content."

"It is bitter to think so, and yet I have long ceased to hope," murmured Paolo. "Tell me though, Nina, what would you have me do?"

His sister told him of the arrangement she had already made with Jack Raby.

"Come, my brother, decide what part you will take — there is no time to be lost; oh! let it be that one worthy of your generous nature."

"Nina, I will do as you wish," Paolo gasped forth, after a long silence. "I will endeavour to save the life of this man, even though my heart break when I see him united to her he loves."

"Swear it, then, Paolo — swear it by the Holy Apostles — swear it, as you hope for Heaven's mercy hereafter," exclaimed Nina. "Not only for your own sake do I impose this oath, but for the sake of the sweet girl herself, that she may know that, though her lover is in his rival's power, he is as safe as in the hands of his dearest friend."

Paolo took the oath his sister prescribed, and leaping off the ruins, hurried, at headlong speed, down to the bay.

Nina followed at a slower pace.

The flight of the fugitives had been discovered by old Vlacco, even before they had quitted the bay. He had awoke in the night, he stated, and had taken it into his head, that he would go to see if they were safe in their prison. He was so astonished and confused on finding they were not there, that, at first, he could not decide what course to take. He then bethought him that his duty required him to inform his chief, and as soon as Zappa was made aware of the fact, the whole island was in commotion, and the pursuit was commenced.

It was with very great satisfaction that Nina heard of Ada's flight, and most earnestly did she pray that she might not be overtaken. For the fair girl's sake, she wished this, and for her own, even still more so. She admired her beauty, she was inclined to love her as a sister — and yet she could not conceal from herself that she greatly feared her as a rival in her husband's affections. She had lately learned, too surely to doubt it, that his love was waning, and that he himself was far different from the character she had supposed him.

By his own acknowledgment, he was a blood-stained pirate; and she had

already too many proofs of the fact, even had he not, now that he was indifferent to her love, boasted to her of his deeds. Sometimes, alas, the dreadful thought would occur to her, that even her life would not be safe, if it stood between him and his wishes; and yet, woman-like, she still loved on. She tried to shut her eyes to his faults, to forget his unkindness, and to discover only the noble qualities she at first believed he possessed. Though she feared Ada, she could not hate her; and would not have harmed her, now that she felt sure she would never consent to become the pirate's bride should she die, much less his mistress; but she was not the less anxious for her departure, and proportionably grieved when she heard that she was once more a prisoner in the island. With natural jealousy, when Zappa spoke of obtaining a ransom for Ada, she had endeavoured to ascertain what steps he had taken, for the purpose of arranging it; and by no means could she learn that he had even made any attempts to open negotiations on the subject with any persons at Malta, or elsewhere; and this confirmed her in her fears that this was simply a pretext to weary out his prisoner, and to reconcile her to her fate. She was certain, also, that Captain Fleetwood could have heard nothing on the subject; as he would, she thought, have preferred so safe a way of recovering her, instead of the dangerous one he had attempted. Such were the subjects which occupied her mind, as she walked down the ravine to meet her rival. In the meantime, Ada had watched, with an anxiety scarcely describable, for the return of Raby; every instant expecting to have the pirates come back; and to have her lover dragged roughly from her; and to have to run the risk either of betraying him, or of allowing him to perish without assistance.

At last Jack arrived, followed at an interval by Paolo.

"Signora," he said, "I have come to take charge of a man I hear is sorely wounded. Do not doubt me; I repeat the oath I have given my sister, that I will, to the best of my abilities, endeavour to restore him to health, and if an occasion occurs, to aid in his escape from hence. I ask — I look for no reward."

"I trust you, signor," replied Ada, giving him her hand. "You could not commit so black an act as to deceive me, and now, oh! hasten to put your good intentions into execution."

On this Paolo told her of the fisherman's hut, to which he purposed to convey Captain Fleetwood, and hurried off to summon the old man. He soon returned, stating that he was from home, and as no time was to be lost, he proposed that he and Raby should carry the wounded officer there at once, with the aid of Ada and Marianna. This they accomplished without much difficulty, by means of a cloak found at the bottom of the boat, and then, urged by Paolo and Raby, Ada tore herself away from him, and with Marianna, endeavoured to find her way up the ravine, while Jack remained to keep watch over his commander.

Chapter Thirty Two.

Lieutenant Saltwell, on whom, in his captain's absence, had devolved the command of the Ione, walked her quarterdeck on the night on which the events we have been describing took place, with a mind very ill at ease.

He had been during the whole afternoon endeavouring, by every possible means in his power, to get the brig up to the spot agreed on, off the island of Lissa, so that he might dispatch the boats at dark to wait still closer in for the coming of Fleetwood and his companions. The breeze with which they had started had failed them soon afterwards, so the sweeps had been got out, and the boats had towed ahead, till he was fearful of knocking up their crews and unfitting them for the work they had still to perform; and yet, do all they could, he was obliged to dispatch them, under the orders of the several lieutenants, with a pull of some eighteen or twenty miles before them.

"For heaven's sake, make the best speed you can," said Saltwell, as he bade his brother officers good bye. "Our captain will make the attempt to-night, depend on it, and it will be sad work if he cannot find the boats."

"Never fear, we shall not miss him, I hope," exclaimed Linton, as he leaped into his boat. "Shove off and give way, my merry men."

The boat's crew did their best; but the event was another convincing proof of the misfortunes which may arise from being a little too late. Had they been ten minutes sooner, they would, perhaps, have been in time to prevent their captain and his companions from falling again into the hands of the pirates. Linton felt this when he found that they were recaptured, and, stung with regret, although he was in no manner to blame, he agreed on the pursuit with a zeal which very nearly led to the destruction of himself and his followers.

We left him severely, if not mortally, wounded, off the mouth of the pirate's harbour. The command, therefore, devolved on Tompion, who immediately ordered the boats to separate as much as possible, keeping within sight of each other, to cause the shots of the enemy to become less effective, by being scattered over a wider range.

"Pull away, my lads," exclaimed the mate; "we shall soon be out of this, and we shall have an opportunity before long of paying them off."

The men needed no inducement to pull hard, for it was excessively hot work, and they had no fancy to be exposed to the showers of bullets which came whizzing round them, especially when they were compelled to run away from the enemy.

The frowning and lofty cliffs, fringed with tiny glances of vivid light, and the bright flashes of the Sea Hawk's guns, which were reflected on the calm water, formed, doubtlessly, an exceedingly picturesque spectacle, which those who were pulling at the oars had full opportunity to contemplate, but not the less disagreeable to them on that account, especially as it would have been a very

useless amusement to fire against the cliffs in return. Fortunately, no further casualties occurred, and every instant, as their distance from the shore increased, there was less chance of a shot hitting them. At length, Tompion, seeing that they were free from danger, hailed the other boats, to order the crews to rest on their oars to recover breath, before they shaped their course to return to their ship. The hail was answered by another from the westernmost boat, commanded by Jemmy Duff; he sung out, —

"Did you see the mistico get into the harbour, with the rest of the rascals?"

"No," said Tompion. "Did any one on board see her?" he asked of the crew.

"No, sir," was the general answer.

"No one saw her go in," he answered.

"Then, by Jove, there she is, on our starboard beam," sung out Duff in return. "She is pretty nearly becalmed, it seems. She has got out there, I suspect, to watch us, and to try to cut us off. What shall we do?"

"I and the gig will close you, and we'll see what is to be done," said Tompion, ordering the other boat to follow him, and all the boats were soon alongside each other.

There, sure enough, Tompion perceived the mistico, about a quarter of a mile off, with her head to the southward, evidently watching their movements. It might seem surprising that she had not attacked them when under the cliffs; but, in the first place, she could not then get up to them, and had she been able to do so, it would have prevented the pirates on shore from firing on them.

The wind had at this juncture almost failed her, but she had her sweeps to depend on, and with a strong crew they could send her along at a great rate. She was commanded on the present occasion by the second lieutenant of the Sea Hawk — at least by the officer who performed the duties of one — who had hurried on board with as many men as he could find, and swept out to sea the moment the alarm of the prisoners' escape was given; and now, somewhat mistaking the character of British seamen, he had begun to edge up towards the boats, purposely to take them by surprise, and hoping to make them an easy prey.

Of most of this Tompion was soon aware, and it now became a question as to the advisability of attacking her instead.

"What does Mr Linton say?" asked Duff. "We should not take long about it, I think, and she would be something to show for our night's work."

"Tell Mr Linton how things stand, Jennings, and ask him what he wishes us to do," said Tompion to the coxswain of the gig.

"Poor Mr Linton can say nothing, sir," returned Jennings, in a sorrowful tone. "I'm afraid he'll never speak again."

An exclamation of grief escaped from all who heard the words.

"What! is he dead?" inquired Tompion, in a voice which showed that he participated in the feeling of the crews, although he might very probably benefit by the vacancy thus created; yet, I will venture to say, the thought of this did not enter his head.

"No, sir, not dead, I hope," said the coxswain. "I have bound up his wound as well as I can, and stopped the bleeding; but he's in a dead faint, and I don't know if he'll come to again."

"Well, Duff, I should like to act as Mr Linton would have done, and I'm sure he would have attacked the mistico without giving two thoughts about it," observed Tompion; "but then, again, for his sake, we ought to get back to the ship as fast as we can, to obtain surgical assistance for him."

"I know how you feel, Tompion," exclaimed Jemmy Duff — "but I have it: our two boats can easily tackle the rascally mistico, and let the gig pull back to the brig as fast as she can, with Mr Linton and Timmins here, who is badly hurt, and let them tell Saltwell of our whereabouts, and we shall fall in with her before the morning with a prize in tow, I hope."

"Capital!" exclaimed Tompion, who was, for a wonder, not above taking advice from a junior, when it happened to be good, and coincided with his own opinion. "What say you, my lads — do you think you've got strength enough in your arms to punish some of those rascals for Mr Linton's too like death, and the trick they played us?"

"All right, sir, never fear. We can give it them yet," exclaimed both crews, with one voice; and seldom will British seamen be found to make any other answer.

"Well, then, Jennings, do you steer due west, — right for that tar, that is your course. When you get about five miles from this, fire a musket, and continue firing every ten minutes. They will show a blue light as soon as they hear you, and you can scarcely miss the ship. Take poor Timmins on board with you — there's no one else hurt, I hope."

"No, sir, no," was the answer.

"I need not tell you to make the best of your way, and I'm sorry, for your sakes, we can't have you, my men, with us, in the affair on hand."

Having given these orders, most reluctantly they were obeyed by the crew of the gig, which immediately pulled away in the direction pointed out, and was soon lost to sight in the gloom. Tompion made the necessary preparations for the attack on the mistico.

He was not above despising an enemy whom he intended to attack, and as the fight, in which he was about to engage, would be the first in which he had held the command, he was doubly anxious that it should be successful. He ordered his men to see that their pistols, and the muskets in the boat, were properly loaded and primed, and a small brass swivel, mounted in the bows, he had loaded with musket balls, almost up to the muzzle, to fire as they ran past the enemy's quarter.

"Duff," he exclaimed, "you board on the starboard side, I will grapple her on the larboard, as I want to be a few seconds before you, to give her a taste of my gun, and if she stands in as she now does, I shall get there quickest. Now, my men, give way, and let the scoundrels have a taste of your cutlasses when you get at them. Huzza for old England!"

As he uttered these words, the men repeated the cheer till the night air rung again, and bending to their oars, made the water fly from under the bows of the boats, while their heads turned in the direction of the piratical mistico.

The loud cheer and the suddenness of the movement completely took the pirates by surprise, it appeared; and instead of tacking and standing boldly towards the English to meet them, as they expected, her helm was put up, the sheets eased off, her long sweeps run out, and away she went dead before the wind, at a rate which Tompion saw would give his men a tough pull to come up with her. Another reason for her so doing was soon apparent, by her opening a fire of two swivel guns over her counter, which her crew probably calculated would check the advance of the boats. It is extraordinary at what speed the Greek misticos can be urged through the water; and on this occasion the Zoe did full justice to her character, for her crew were strong, fresh, and in high spirits, while, on the other hand, the British seamen had been rowing all night, and the greater part of the day, and were dispirited by the loss of their officer and the ill success of the expedition; not, however, that this prevented them from exerting themselves to the very utmost of their strength. The wind also, which had been very uncertain and changeable, now almost a calm, now a fresh breeze, now blowing from the eastward, now some points to the north of it, then a like number to the south, seemed suddenly to fix itself in the latter point with a considerable increase of strength, which sent the mistico flying through the water at a greater speed than ever.

"Give way, my men, oh, give way!" shouted Tompion, scarcely able to articulate in his eagerness to overtake the enemy, for with the increase of the breeze he saw their chance of doing so gradually fading away, and the proud hopes he had begun to form, of revenging the loss they had sustained, and of being able to carry with him his first prize as a proof of what they had done, with a vista of honour and promotion in the distance, cruelly dissipated. Again the British seamen cheered, and stretched their arms till their oars bent and cracked, but the sound was answered by shouts of derisive laughter from the Greeks, and a discharge from their swivel guns with several rounds from their musketry, though happily without doing much damage. Both boats were struck over and over again, and one man was wounded, but not sufficiently to disable him.

The cutter returned it with a bow-chaser, and to some purpose, it seemed, by the cries and shrieks which followed.

"Give it them again!" shouted Tompion. "If they do get away, they shall have cause to remember us. Fire, my men, fire!"

Again the shot told with fearful effect among the crowded crew of the Zoe; and from the cries and confusion on board they had reason to hope that some of those working her sweeps were disabled; and as the firing ceased, that those who had worked the guns had taken their places. Tompion had been narrowly watching her movements; he had from the first suspected some ruse to be played off on him.

"Ah! she has put her helm to port, and is running in for the land again!" he exclaimed. "Keep a little more to the eastward, Duff, and try to out her off; we may have her yet, before she gets into port."

The mistico had had quite enough to say, it seemed, to the British boats; and was now endeavouring to get safe into the harbour, and very probably to try and tempt them to follow her, if they had not already had sufficient warning of what they might expect if they did so.

On they all three went in the same direction, the mistico by her change of course being thrown somewhat nearer to her pursuers than she before was, but they otherwise gained little, if anything, on her. The cutter perseveringly kept up her fire as fast as the gun could be cleaned and loaded, and the mistico more slowly returned it, the small sheets of flame which ever and anon issued from the mouths of the pieces showing their position to those on shore, as they drew near.

Still Tompion did not like to abandon the pursuit — they had already expended so much exertion and time, that he felt as if it would be throwing it all uselessly away if they were, after all, to fail; and yet he began to see that they had already gone far enough, and that, if he persisted in the chase, he might incur a greater disaster than had yet happened to them. He looked up at the cliffs, and tried to persuade himself that they were still at some distance off. They certainly looked very dark and lofty; but as there was no firing from them, he thought that they must be still too far off for any shot to reach them. The crew of the mistico, now that they felt pretty certain of not being captured, cheered and laughed, and called out to them, using every device to enrage them, and induce them to follow.

"We must soon be about ship, Duff!" Tompion sang out from his boat; "and I am afraid, after all, we have done little good."

"If you will go on a little longer, perhaps the wind may shift, and we shall have her becalmed under the cliffs," replied the midshipman. "It would be a great thing to carry her off in sight of the enemy."

Tompion was too ready to follow his messmate's advice, so they persevered in the chase with great gallantry, but certainly with a want of discretion, though it must be borne in mind that they had now less danger to apprehend either from the brig or the cliffs, as the pirates could not possibly fire without risking the killing of friends as well as foes. Now, although Tompion fancied that all their exertions would be thrown away, he was not aware, as the reader possibly is, that they were of the very greatest service to their friends on shore. It was their gallant pursuit of the mistico which had so completely engaged the attention of the pirates that they entirely forgot their prisoners, and allowed them to make the arrangements I have described. Had it not been for them, their captain would very soon have been discovered by Zappa, and his life would probably have been sacrificed, Raby would not have had time to reach Nina's tower, nor would Nina have found Paolo, and sent him to assist the sufferers. Thus it is, by persevering in doing what is right, and brave, and honest, in all

the affairs in life, good will ultimately arise from our acts, even though we ourselves may not immediately discover it, and though; perhaps, we may to the end of our lives remain in ignorance of the effect we have produced. There is a time when all things must be known, and then we shall reap our reward. Let this be a consolation to us in all our troubles and disappointments when we have been strenuously endeavouring to do some important good, and find all our plans and projects defeated by the selfishness, the ignorance, the obstinacy of others, perhaps of the persons we would benefit, till at last we are inclined to exclaim: "What is the use of attempting to do good in this world? Do all I can, I cannot succeed." We do succeed — we can succeed; often, very often, when the result is not seen. We may, it is true, strive very much, and yet do very little good; but is not that little good something? is it not pure gold — treasure which will endure? So also (I am moralising while the British boats are still in pursuit of the mistico) man cannot see the ultimate result of the evil he may commit — there the order is reversed. A little evil in appearance may cause a vast amount of crime, wretchedness, and suffering. Even a word idly spoken may give rise to thoughts which may grow up and flourish, till they become like a upas tree to destroy all within their influence. To commit a small evil may be like the withdrawing the keystone from the arch, to cause the ruin of the whole edifice; or it may be like an ear of corn, which may soon serve to sow the whole field, and in the end millions and millions of acres. If men could but remember this, they would hesitate ere, by a seemingly trivial act, they incurred the awful responsibility of the immeasurable amount of crime and suffering they may cause.

How much further Tompion and Duff would have ventured I do not know, when their progress was arrested by a sight which silenced even the jeering laughter of the pirates. A loud, crashing noise was heard, which seemed to rend and tear in sunder the very cliffs, from the summit of which bright flames burst forth suddenly, and exposing the pinnacled rocks, the shattered ruins, and the groups of figures standing on them, in front of the fire, to the view of those below. The glare for the first moment almost blinded the eyes of the English, so long accustomed to darkness; but they soon saw that the fire proceeded from a tall tower near the edge of the cliff, and that the flames were bursting forth from the door, the windows, and the very roof itself, quickly towering up towards the sky. That some dreadful catastrophe had occurred, there appeared to be no doubt by the commotion created among the people. They began to run in all directions; some, it seemed, to procure water to throw on the flames, others to find ladders to scale the walls, and some were seen to attempt to gain the interior, but were again speedily driven forth by the fury of the flames. Their efforts, it was very soon seen, were of little avail, the flames seemed to gain fresh strength by some new stimulant, they darted up higher than before in a pyramid of fire, the tower was seen to rock to and fro, and down it came with a tremendous crash, burying, it seemed too probable, beneath its burning ruins many who could not have had time to escape to a distance. The mistico,

while this event was taking place, had, favoured by the wind, got considerably ahead of the boats, and was by this time close in with the harbour's mouth.

"Duff, ahoy," cried Tompion. "That looks like a warning to us, and I think we ought to take it, and be off before the villains recover from their confusion. Pull up your starboard oars. We must give it up."

"I am afraid so," said Duff, imitating his senior's example, and defeated in their object, the two boats once more steered in the direction where it was expected the Ione would be found. They were allowed to escape without further molestation, for the greater number of the pirates were engaged in watching the progress of the flames, or in endeavouring to quench them; for not only was the tower destroyed, but the fire had communicated to the building attached to it, and that also was rapidly being consumed.

Saltwell had too much anxiety on his mind to allow him to turn in to take any rest, and for the greater part of the night he had walked the deck while he beat the brig up towards the island. He became still more anxious, as the morning approached, at the non-appearance of the boats, and was continually hailing the look-outs to keep their eyes and ears open to catch any sign of their coming. Colonel Gauntlett, who, of course, was not less anxious on his niece's account, was also constantly by his side; but the hours of night wore on, and no boats appeared. The brig stood on towards the island, for Saltwell considered that if the expedition was successful, there was no further reason for concealment, and that the nearer he got the better, and that, at all events, with the breeze which had sprung up, he could stand out of sight of land again, before daylight. The faint outline of the island, invisible to any but a seaman's eye, at last appeared through the darkness. Several of the officers were collected together on the poop, looking towards it, as the brig now lay up on the starboard tack.

"Ah, what is that?" exclaimed Saltwell, as a bright light was seen reflected on the sky.

"Why, they have either set fire to one of their vessels, or have blown up some fort or other. That may account for the boats' not returning."

"I don't think that is likely," observed Colonel Gauntlett. "Captain Fleetwood would scarcely delay to attack the pirates with a lady in one of the boats. Would you, Mr Saltwell?"

"No, sir, I would not," returned Saltwell. "You are right, and I do not think the captain would; but still I cannot account for the fire, and it is a large one, or we should not see it at this distance."

"I see no reason to conclude that Captain Fleetwood has anything to do with the conflagration," observed the colonel. "I wish we could see something of him and my little girl though. It is hazardous work he has been on, and I do not half like it. Couldn't you fire a few guns, to give them notice of our whereabouts? I don't see how they are to find the ship otherwise."

"A sailor's eye is sharper than you may suppose, colonel," said Saltwell; "and depend on it, they will keep a sharp lookout for us. However, I will do as you

propose, for the wind is off the shore, and the pirates are not likely to hear the guns. Mr Brown, fire the foremost gun on the starboard side, and the next to it in four minutes' time."

Directly after the order was issued, the gun sent forth its sheet of flame, and its dull sound was heard booming along the waters. Several others followed without any answering signal. The Ione had now, in Mr Saltwell's opinion, stood long enough to the northward, or rather to the north-east, so he tacked ship, and they headed up rather more towards the island, though she soon again fell off nearly south. The larboard guns were now fired, and at last a tiny spirt of fire was seen to the eastward, and the sharp report of a musket struck on the ears.

"About ship then," cried Saltwell, and when she was round, after standing on a little way he hove her to, and ordered Mr Black to burn a blue light to show their position. On this a faint cheer came down on the wind to prove that the signal was perceived. The next few minutes were passed, by those more immediately interested in the success of the expedition, in considerable anxiety. The splash of oars was heard, and but a single boat glided out of the darkness.

"In Heaven's name, where are the rest?" was the question asked by many voices at once.

"Mr Tompion sent me back, sir, with Mr Linton, who is badly hurt, while he and Mr Duff stopped to chase a pirate craft which had been dodging us," replied Jennings, to Saltwell's questions, giving afterwards a brief account of the failure of their expedition.

"Poor Linton wounded, and by such villains," muttered Saltwell, as his brother-officer was lifted carefully on deck. "How does he seem, Viall?" he inquired of the surgeon, who hurried forward when he heard what had occurred.

"We shall see better when we get him below," returned the surgeon. "He is alive, and that is all I can say."

The wounded officer was carried to his berth, where the surgeon and his assistants assembled to examine his hurts.

"This is a bad business, indeed, for the captain," said Saltwell to Colonel Gauntlett, as they resumed their walk on the poop, while the ship remained hove to, waiting for the arrival of the other boats; "I fear the pirate will murder him, and those with him, when he finds out who he is."

"What, think you he will venture to murder a British officer, when he knows that his strong-hold is discovered, and that his death would certainly be avenged?" exclaimed the colonel. "Poor fellow! and my little niece — if the poor girl ever escapes from that infernal den — I'm afraid she will never recover it."

"I own, I fear for the worst," said Saltwell, who was weary, and out of spirits. "Zappa knows well enough that he has deserved a rope, and, from what I hear, he is the sort of character to win it thoroughly; but we must do our best to punish him. As soon as the boats come back, I intend to give Tompion a fresh

crew, and to leave him in the cutter, well armed and provisioned, to watch the island, while we go in search of the Ypsilante; and, as Captain Vassilato left her under my orders, I shall send her off with a requisition to any of our cruisers she can fall in with, to assemble at an island to the southward of this; and I have not the slightest doubt, that any captain, who happens to be senior officer, when he hears of what has occurred, will take the responsibility of ordering a grand attack on the island. If not, we will, by Heaven, try what our own brave fellows and the crew of the Ypsilante can do to rescue their captain, or avenge their deaths."

"Bravo, Mr Saltwell, I am rejoiced to hear you say this," exclaimed the colonel, warmly grasping the lieutenant's hand. "And I and Mitchell will act as volunteers with the marines. I wish we had done this at first. A strong hand and a firm heart, are the best things to trust to. I never liked the plan poor Fleetwood has pursued, from the first. Your plots and your disguises seldom succeed; and they are not fit for Englishmen to engage in — they are contrary to the genius of our country, thank Heaven; but that Greek friend of his over-persuaded him, and, I am afraid, has led him to his destruction."

"I wish that I could say, sir, that I thought all had gone well," returned Saltwell. "However, we must now do our best to mend matters. Well, doctor, what report can you make of poor Linton?" he asked of the surgeon, who just then appeared on deck.

"I have extracted the ball, and he has recovered his senses," answered the surgeon. "He is in very great danger; but I can give no decided opinion as yet. He has expressed a wish to see you, and has begged me to call you."

"Poor, poor fellow, I'll go below instantly," cried Saltwell, hurrying down, and auguring the worst from the doctor's tone.

He found Linton stretched out in his narrow berth, lighted by the sickly glare of a small lamp fastened against the bulkhead.

The clothes had been thrown over the lower part of his body; but his shoulder was bare, the pallid hue of his skin contrasting with the dark, red stains on the linen of the shirt, which had been cut off, and still lay beneath it. The arm, on the side where the ball had entered the neck, lay immovable by his side, looking shrunk and withered, except a slight twitching of the fingers, which showed the agony he was enduring.

O'Farrell, the assistant surgeon, sat at the head of the bed, applying a cooling lotion round the part which had been bound up, to prevent inflammation, if possible, from setting in, administering now and then some restorative to revive him from the exhaustion consequent to his great loss of blood.

As soon as Saltwell entered, his eyes turned towards him, and his lips moved; but his brother-officer heard no sound, till he put his ear close to his mouth.

"Saltwell," he whispered, "don't let them blame me wrongfully for being beaten off by those rascally pirates; I did my best, as you know I would. Our

poor captain — I grieve for him more. Don't let a stain remain on our names. And, Saltwell, if I die, as I think I shall, when you get home, see my poor Julia — bear her my deepest love, and tell her I thought of her to the last."

"I'll do all you wish, my dear fellow," answered Saltwell, deeply affected. "But we must not let you slip through the doctor's fingers; cheer up, for the sake of all your friends. And now try and get some rest — it will do you more good than any thing I can say, or the doctor can give you."

"I fear not, Saltwell, I fear not," said Linton. "But I won't keep you, for you'll be wanted on deck, as the boats will soon be coming back, and I trust to you to remember to fulfil my wishes."

Saltwell saw that his presence did more harm than good to his wounded friend, as it induced him to talk; so, bidding him try to sleep, he left the cabin. As he reached the deck, he saw that the first faint indications of the coming dawn had appeared in the eastern horizon — not streaks of light exactly, but a less dense gloom, which could best be distinguished by contrasting it with the darkness of the opposite horizon, and, at that instant, the flash of a gun was seen in the same quarter, and the sound came booming over the water towards them.

"Ah! there comes the cutter," he exclaimed; "Tompion is firing his brass gun to draw our attention. Don't fire again, Mr Black, it is not necessary, and will disturb Mr Linton, but burn a blue light — it will prevent their going out of their course, for it will be some time before they will otherwise be able to distinguish us."

The gunner had the blue light already, expecting to be called on to use it, and the next instant a lurid glare illumined the whole ship; the sails, the spars, and the countenances of the people, all assumed a sepulchral hue, which gave her the appearance of some phantom bark, such as has appeared to the excited imagination of many a seaman in his wandering through those distant and torrid climes, whose pestilential vapours, rising from the overteeming earth, fever his blood and cut short his span of life.

It had scarcely done burning before another gun was fired; but whether as a signal, or for any other reason, it was, at first, impossible to say, till several others followed in rapid succession.

"It must be a summons to us," observed the first lieutenant to the master. "Fill the fore-topsail, and let fall the fore-sail — we will, at all events, stand on as close as we can to them."

The breeze, which sent the Ione along, was very light, so that some time elapsed before she neared the spot whence the firing had been supposed to proceed. Saltwell was on the point of ordering another blue light to be burned, when a loud hail was heard, and, directly afterwards, the boats were seen approaching as fast as the weary crews could send them through the water.

"Has Mr Linton got back alive?" were the first words heard spoken by Tompion.

"Yes — yes, all right," was the answer.

"Thank Heaven for that!" he exclaimed; and, as soon as the cutter ran alongside, he jumped on deck and went aft to report himself as come on board.

"I hope you do not think that I have done wrong, sir," he said, when he had finished his account of what had occurred. "I fully thought we should capture the mistico, and I could not tell but what some of our friends had been taken on board her."

"No, Mr Tompion, I have no reason to find fault with your behaviour. As far as I can judge, you showed judgment and gallantry, which, in an officer, it is all important should always be combined. And, at all events, you have got clear out of the scrape, though you certainly ran a great risk of being captured."

"Well, sir, I am very glad you approve of what I have done," answered Tompion. "And now, sir, if you will allow me to make a suggestion, I would keep off the island till daylight; for, not long ago, as we were pulling here, both Duff and I fancied we heard some firing off the mouth of the harbour, but we could not tell for certain, we've had such a din of popping in our ears all night; however, I cannot help thinking some of the party have made another attempt to escape."

"I am afraid that there is very little chance of that," said Saltwell. "If that villain, Zappa, does not murder them, it is more than I expect. However, we'll stand on towards the island till daybreak, as you suggest; and now, Mr Tompion, I should think you require both rest and food, so go down below and take them. Tell Mason to give you and Mr Duff whatever he has got in the gun-room — you'll get it quicker there than in your own berth."

Midshipmen are proverbially hungry, and I need not say that our two young friends did ample justice to a cold round of beef, which the gun-room steward placed before them.

Saltwell had scarcely turned in when he was again roused up by Togle, the midshipman of the watch, who came to tell him that a suspicious sail was seen to the eastward. He immediately came on deck; and just in the centre of the red glow on the sky, which precedes the rising of the bright luminary of day, there appeared the tapering sails of a lateen-rigged craft, looking like the dark fin of a huge shark, just floating on the lead-coloured waters.

"She's standing this way too, by Jove!" he exclaimed. "And give me a glass. I thought so; she's in chase of a small boat under sail, just a-head of her Mr Togle, go aloft with a glass, and see what you can make out. I can distinguish little more than the upper leech of the sail; and were it not so calm, even that could not be seen."

Togle hailed from aloft, to say that there was certainly a boat a-head of the stranger.

"I think that I can even make out that she has people in her, as she is much nearer us than the mistico, which keeps firing at her every now and then."

"You are right," said the lieutenant, as the midshipman came on deck. "She is little more than half way between us. All hands make sail! We must do our best to overhaul her first; for, though I have slight hopes on the subject, she

may have some of our friends in her, trying to escape."

Every stitch of canvas the brig could carry on a wind was now set; but the mistico stood boldly on, and it became a matter of great doubt whether or not she would have time to get hold of her prey, and escape back to port before the Ione could come up with her.

Chapter Thirty Three.

The triumph of Zappa at recovering Miss Garden was great, in proportion to his anger against those whom he suspected to have assisted at her escape; but once having got her again in his power, and safe inside his well-fortified harbour, he felt as a cat does towards the unfortunate mouse it has caught and killed — that he might leave and return to her when he pleased, without a chance of her again running away: he therefore hurried off to the fort, at the summit of the cliffs, to superintend the destruction of the English flotilla, which he believed had been sent against him; for he could not have supposed that so small a force as was really there would have thus boldly followed him to the very mouth of his den.

On his arrival at the fort, he found old Vlacco busily engaged in pointing the guns to bear down on the British boats; and on his sounding his well-known bugle, a large number of his followers collected with their fire-arms, to assist in the defence of the post. While they all were occupied in firing at the enemy, Vlacco sent into the tower to bring a supply of powder for the guns, from some casks, which, with the usual carelessness of the Greeks, had been left there without the slightest precaution against accident. A cask was broached, and much of the powder scattered about. After the boats had disappeared, the pirates were retiring from the fort, when Tompion's gallant attack on the mistico called them back, and it was at this time that a spark from the lantern of a man, sent for a further supply of powder, fell among the scattered grains, and produced the conflagration I have before spoken of. As the flames burst forth, and burnt with terrific energy, Zappa flew towards the building, in vain endeavouring to find means of entrance. Wherever he attempted it at the door or window, the fire drove him back. In vain he called on the name of Nina. She neither answered nor did she appear at either of the casements. His usual calm demeanour had completely deserted him, and he seemed like a madman as he rushed round the building, urging his followers to bring ladders to enable him to mount to the story, where he expected to find her. Two were at last found, but they were far too short to be of use, and he was soon warned to retire to a distance by the explosion of another cask of powder, which shook the old walls to their foundation, and he had scarcely got to a secure position, when the remainder igniting, the whole edifice came tumbling down at once, and lay a heap of smoking ruins on the ground. Some of the burning embers had fallen on the roof of the adjoining building, and that now blazed up, and being very dry and rotten, burnt with equal fury, so that in a very short time it was reduced to a heap of ashes: the old walls of the castle, against which it was built, alone standing. It was thus that all traces of the means by which the prisoners had made their escape were obliterated. The islanders could do nothing to stop the progress of the flames, for the only water procurable was from a deep well,

whence only a small quantity could be drawn up at a time, and there were no means at hand to get it from the sea, over the cliffs.

The conflagration had the effect of attracting the population, far and near, to the spot — the fishermen and other inhabitants of the neighbouring village, the seamen from the vessels, and indeed everybody in the bay, came rushing up the ravine to see what was taking place.

Zappa stood at a distance, contemplating the scene of havoc. He thought of Nina in all her youth and beauty, of her fond affection, her deep devotion, of all the sacrifices she had made for him — and callous and bad as was his heart, a transient pang of bitter regret visited it, for the cruel return he had made her.

"This, then, Nina Montifalcone, is the fate I have reserved for you. An agonising death the only reward I can give you for that love which still endured after I had torn aside the bright veil with which your fervid imagination had clothed me, and showed myself to you in my real colours — that love which I verily believed would have endured after you knew that my heart had been captivated by one still younger, still more beautiful, than yourself."

As he gave vent aloud to these feelings, so strange to his bosom, which now agitated him, he suddenly stood like one transfixed, his breath came thick, his eye dilated, for there before him, with the full glare of the fire falling on her, stood the figure of Nina. Her countenance was pale as death, and she neither spoke nor approached him.

"Who are you?" he exclaimed at length, in a voice trembling with emotion; "speak, if you would not drive me to distraction. Tell me whence you come, and why you now come to seek me."

"I am Nina Montifalcone, — some time your wife, whom you oft have told you loved," she replied, in a tone of deep dejection. "What I soon shall be, the greedy worm may best tell."

Her voice recalled him to his senses, though her words seemed strange.

"Nina," he exclaimed, "you overheard my vain ravings when I thought you had fallen a victim to yon devouring flames; but think no more of them, and tell me by what miracle you escaped from the tower, before the flames burst forth — for afterwards, no power could have saved you."

"I had gone to comfort and succour the unfortunate, those whom your injustice has made prisoners in this island, and I sought you even now to plead for them," she answered boldly; the tone of meek sorrow with which she had before spoken being no longer discernible.

"You take me unawares, and would work on me at a weak moment, Nina," he replied. "But know you, girl, that the persons of whom you speak are spies, come here in disguise to work my destruction? Ah! you look surprised, incredulous! Yes, these men — these pretended Maltese — are no other than Englishmen, belonging to a ship of war lying at no great distance from this island, for the express purpose of capturing my vessel, my gallant Sea Hawk, if they can fall in with her; and I have not told you all — their leader is the captain himself, the very man to whom that fair English girl, of whom you are so

foolishly jealous, is betrothed. I knew this, I say, from the first; but I pretended ignorance, for I wished to discover who were their accomplices among those I trusted. He even now lies dead or dying in the bay below, and I left the fair girl with him, that she might know I did not kill him; but I tell you, Nina, if he were to recover, he should not live to escape, and to bring destruction on me. If he dies now, it is through his own folly, and no one can accuse me of having slain him; so, except you would wish to make his blood rest on my head, do not pray for his recovery."

"Oh! you would not do so black a deed — you would not slay an innocent man because he came to regain the bride of whom you had deprived him! for I feel assured that for no other object did he visit this island; and that should he recover, were you to give her to him, and allow him and those who came with him to depart, he would promise never to molest you, or to take advantage in any way of the knowledge he has obtained by his visit to this island."

Nina spoke with firmness and energy, as she said this, for she fancied that her arguments were so good, she could not fail to gain her object.

"Ah! have you been consulting with the English signora and her lover, that you plead their cause so well?" he exclaimed, with the bitter tone in which he often spoke. "Well, I will see to it, and now come to the fair lady's palace, she will afford us lodging there, since ours is burnt down; which, Nina, it appears, troubles you but little. Know you not, girl, that I have there lost property to the value of many thousand piastres? That is alone enough to sour a man's temper, till he can replace them, which, were I to follow your wishes, it would be long enough before I could do."

"My mind was too much occupied with the object I have spoken to you about, to think of the loss, even though everything I possessed was destroyed," she replied, quietly. "But I still felt thankful that I was preserved from the dreadful fate which would have been mine had I remained in the building; and if you also feel gratitude to Heaven for this, show it by granting life and liberty to the English captain and his friends. You accuse me of being influenced by them to plead their cause; but it is not they who influence me, — it is honour, justice, right, and oh! my husband, remember that their fate may soon be yours, and that if you show not mercy to them, you can expect none in return."

"I know that, Nina, I expect none," he answered, fiercely. "Were I to fall into the power of my enemies, they would tear me limb from limb, and mock my dying agonies with their laughter, ere they showed me mercy or gave me liberty. I do, Nina, as I expect to be done by; I hope for nothing else. But why do I stand prating here? My house is burnt to the ground, and my property destroyed, so we must go and crave shelter of the Signora Ada, for you and I have many things to do before I again close my eyes in sleep."

When they arrived at the Stranger's Tower, as the Greeks had called the building inhabited by Ada, they found that she and Marianna had already arrived there, and returned to their former quarters, according to Nina's advice, as if nothing had happened to disturb them. She had, indeed, seen them safe

lodged there before she sought her husband; and she now returned to them by his directions, to take some rest, which she much required, while he occupied the lower and still unfurnished chamber as a sort of council-hall, where he summoned Vlacco and some of his chief officers to consult what, under the present circumstances, it would be necessary for them to do.

As soon as old Vlacco and one or two others had arrived, he sent to have all the prisoners brought before him, that he might examine them respecting their object in venturing on his island, and their motive for leaving it. His visit to the Ione must be remembered, and that he there only learned that her captain had gone on a secret expedition, and he naturally concluded that he was accompanied by his own crew. His surprise was, therefore, very great, when Captain Vassilato, Bowse, and the Maltese, Pietro, were dragged rudely into his presence.

"What!" he muttered, as he saw the honest skipper. "Have my people again done their work so clumsily, that another vessel has floated to bear evidence against me? It must be he, and yet he looks so unconscious of having seen me before, that I must be deceived. There were five prisoners," he remarked, aloud. "Where are the other two?"

"We cannot find them, chief," was the answer. "We have looked in every direction, we have inquired of all, but no one has seen them or heard of them."

"How is this?" exclaimed Zappa. "I left one of them, whom I knew to be no other than the captain of an English ship of war, sent here to watch the Sea Hawk, wounded and dying in old Listi's boat, with the stranger lady and her attendant watching him, and as they, I hear, have already returned here, I suppose they would not have deserted him. Let them and the Lady Nina be summoned."

In two minutes the two ladies and Marianna stood before him; but he neither rose nor showed them any courtesy.

"Can you inform me, signora, where Captain Fleetwood is to be found?" he exclaimed, with vehemence, addressing Miss Garden, in Italian. "Ah, you thought I was so blind as not to recognise him; you thought I did not observe the fond affection with which you bent over him as he lay wounded in the boat; indeed, you fancied that we keep so careless a watch in this island, that any strangers may come without our discovering them; but let that hope desert you for the future, and now answer me truly, madam."

This was the first intimation that Ada had received that the disguise of Fleetwood had been seen through, and horror at what the consequences might be almost made her sink fainting on the ground; but by a strenuous effort, she recovered sufficiently to answer with apparent calmness, —

"The person, whom you state to be Captain Fleetwood, was removed from the boat to the hut of a fisherman on the beach, as he was in no condition to be carried up here."

"By whom — by whom was he removed?" asked the pirate, impatiently. "You could not have carried him."

"By a man habited as a Maltese, and by your own surgeon, whom I had summoned to attend on him," replied Ada, firmly.

"Why, that must be Salamonsi's cottage," remarked Zappa, turning to Vlacco. "Send down forthwith, and let the boy and Signor Paolo be brought up here; and mark you, if the English captain has recovered the use of his tongue, let him be conveyed here also — he shall answer for himself." He said this in Romaic, so Ada did not understand the cruel order; but Nina did, and, with an imploring look, she stepped to his side, and besought him to revoke the command; but he roughly repulsed her, and, turning to the other three prisoners, he asked, in the lingua Franca, often used by him, — "By what right have you, who were hospitably entertained in this island, attempted to run off with persons whom you knew were my prisoners?"

On this the Maltese seaman, Pietro, stepped forward, and, with the volubility for which the islanders are celebrated, made the long statement which had been previously agreed on, finishing by stating that he and his two companions had been engaged by the lady to convey her on board an English ship, and that they had no reason to suppose they were injuring any one by so doing. As this was all said in Maltese, scarcely a word of which language Zappa understood, he was not a little puzzled, and was insisting on having it repeated in some more intelligible tongue, when Marianna, who was highly delighted with it, not the less so that she knew it contained scarcely a word of truth, volunteered to translate it into Italian, and immediately began with such little additions and touches of her own as she thought would increase the force and probability of the story.

"That will do," said Zappa, who was not very easily imposed upon, as she was continuing her own commentaries on what had occurred; then turning to Captain Vassilato, "What defence have you to make?"

"As you do not understand my language, and I speak but little lingua Franca, I can say no more than my shipmate," he replied between his teeth, in the language he mentioned.

"And you," said Zappa, in the same patois, turning to Bowse. "What have you to say for yourself."

Poor Bowse, who knew but little of any language except his mother-tongue, his accent undeniably betraying him whenever he did attempt to express himself, thought silence would be his best course, so shaking his head he pointed to his tongue and gave forth some inarticulate sounds, unlike any known dialect.

"You have spoken loud enough before, accursed spy," exclaimed the pirate, in Italian, starting up, and menacing him with his dagger. "So you thought I did not know you either; you thought I should not remember the man with whom I once have crossed blades, even though I fancied he was food for the fish of the sea. Fools that you were to venture into the lion's den; or, venturing in, to attempt to carry off his prey. But enough of this, your guilt is clear; you came as spies, and you shall meet their reward. Over the cliffs with the three; we will

quickly send their companions after them."

He said this in Italian, and then repeated it in Romaic.

Old Vlacco, who was now in his element, and delighted at the decision of his chief — indeed, he longed to propose that Ada and Marianna should be made to bear them company — seized the unfortunate men, and was dragging them off with the aid of others of the pirates, when Nina flew to the door to bar their exit.

"No, this must not, this shall not be!" she exclaimed, in a voice hoarse and trembling with agitation, so unlike her own usual sweet tone. "Wretch, pirate, robber, murderer! You have crimes enough already on your head, without adding others of yet blacker dye, to drag me and all who witness them down to destruction with yourself. If you murder them, you murder me, for I will not live to be the wife of a wretch so accursed; and, think you that yon fair girl would yield to your wishes — would, forsooth, become your bride, even were I gone, and her brave lover also dead, and no one even on earth to protect her? I tell you, monster, no! You have seen, that meek and delicate as she appears, how much she can endure without complaining; you have yet to learn that she has an unconquerable spirit, and a reliance on the God of Heaven, which would enable her to defend herself from you. Now, do your worst! Murder me if you will. It will but be a fair return for what I have lost for you. Murder those men. Insist on your followers executing your vile commands, and, from that moment, you lose my love, valueless it may be, and you lose all hopes of gaining that of any other human creature whose love is worth the winning, and who knows of your misdeeds; and you bring down the sure and rapid vengeance of an outraged Heaven on your defenceless head."

The pirate at first heard her thus boldly speak with astonishment, and then with rage, which increased till it passed his control. His hand had been clutching his dagger; and, as she uttered these last words, almost, it is to be hoped, before he himself was aware of what he was about, he hurled it with terrific violence at her, uttering a howl like that of a tiger. The weapon flew from his hand; it wounded her delicate neck, and stuck quivering in the rough planking of the door. She neither screamed nor sank to the ground, but stood, as before, unmoved as a marble statue, though her cheek blanched to a yet more pallid hue than before, while the red stream issued from the wound, and ran down her bosom. Ada sprang forward to support her, but she waved her off.

"Stay," she said, "I must yet speak again. That unmanly blow has done more than pierce the frail body, it has cut asunder ties which I thought would have endured till life became extinct; it has unriveted links which I believed would have survived, in strength and beauty, the decay even of the cold grave; but I have been taught this night to abhor the false idol I once worshipped so devotedly; and now I shall welcome death, come when it may, as my only release from misery. Ah! that wound would have been less unkind had it ended at once the bitter mockery of life!"

Even the callous pirate, as he saw the blood flowing from the pure neck

which had been so often bent in fondness over him, felt a pang of regret, and a dread of the consequences, not unmixed with admiration of a spirit so determined as she exhibited.

"Pardon me, Nina!" he exclaimed, springing towards her. "I knew not what I was about. I would not injure you, girl, for worlds! Say you forgive me — say you are not hurt, and I will do all you desire with regard to these men."

"The wound is but a scratch, as you may see," she answered, calmly, keeping him off with her hands, and still standing before the door. "That will quickly heal. My forgiveness can be but of little value to you, but you have it, and my petition is, that you do not injure these men."

"You have preserved their lives for this night, at all events; but I cannot let them go free to betray me and my followers to our enemies," he answered. "Vlacco, there are, I think, some chambers beneath this tower, and formerly used as dungeons, which may again serve the purpose when cleared out of rubbish. They will not be able easily to escape from thence; and, meantime, place a strong guard upon them in the basement story, and see that they hold communication with no one."

The old pirate, with an angry look, showed the disappointment he felt at not being allowed to dispense summary justice to the prisoners, signified to his chief that his orders should be strictly obeyed; and, just as matters had been brought into this state, the messenger, who had been sent to bring up the prisoners and Signor Paolo, returned with the announcement that none of them were to be found. The old fisherman accompanied them, with great dismay in his looks, asserting that he had nothing at all to do with the matter. He had but one instant returned to his cottage, after having assisted in the endeavours to extinguish the fire; he found the door open, and some one had apparently been placed on the mats, which served as his bed, for there was some blood on them, and some pieces of linen and lint lying about, and that was all he knew. He had not spoken to, nor seen Signor Paolo that night. Zappa's anger was very great at hearing this, and he was very nearly revoking the reprieve he had granted to the other prisoners. He believed that treachery had been practised, though, except Paolo and Nina, he knew not whom to suspect; and, while she denied all knowledge of the event, her brother was nowhere to be found; so, weary as he was, he set off with Vlacco and his officers to investigate the matter at the bay.

Chapter Thirty Four.

Left at liberty, Nina and Ada returned to the upper chamber of the tower, where the latter entreated the unhappy Italian girl to allow her to dress the wound in her shoulder, which was far deeper and more serious than she had acknowledged to Zappa; but she refused all assistance.

"No," she said; "no hand but mine shall tend the wound which he has given; and it matters but little, for I feel that the clouds of my destiny are gathering over me, and that very soon the storm will burst to overwhelm me."

But her will was more powerful than her frame, and as she spoke she sank down on the divan, and would have fallen to the ground, had not Ada and Marianna ran to support her. Overcome with agitation and loss of blood, she had fainted, and taking advantage of the opportunity, they placed her on a couch, and while they applied restoratives, they bathed the wound, and tried to staunch the blood. She gave signs at length of life; but hers was no ordinary faint, and for hours did she continue in that state, wavering on the verge of death. As Ada herself, fevered and weary, sat by the side of her friend, she felt almost equally overcome with alarm and anxiety for the fate of her lover. What could have become of him? Had Paolo proved treacherous, and, afraid of his recovery, spirited him away, and cast him over the cliffs? or was she wronging the young Italian, and had he not, mistrusting the mercy of the pirate chief, concealed him in some secret place till his anger had worn off? This she owned to herself was the most probable cause; but love, even on ordinary occasions, is full of doubt and fears, much more so then had she reason for dread under the circumstances in which he was placed. While she believed Zappa was ignorant of who he was, she trusted he was in no other danger than that resulting from his wound; but now that he was discovered, after the dreadful exhibition she had witnessed of the pirate's temper, she trembled at what might be his fate. Why had she quitted him? she thought. Why had she not boldly avowed who he was, and her love for him, and dared the pirate to injure him? She had seen the successful effects Nina had produced by such behaviour on the daring outlaw — why had she not acted in the same manner? She bitterly accused herself of having deserted him, of having trusted him to strangers, and, more than all, of being the cause of his death. This thought gave her the most poignant grief, and she prayed that if Heaven had ordained that he must thus die, she might be spared the misery of knowing it. Daylight surprised her still sitting by the couch whereon lay the yet more unhappy Nina.

"And yet, compared to that poor girl's fate, mine is blessed indeed," she thought, as she, watched those pallid features, on which an expression of acute pain still rested. "She staked all for love, and has found the idol she madly worshipped turned into a demon, who she feels will destroy her. She, too, has an accusing conscience to keep happiness at a distance. She remembers that

she burst asunder the bonds of duty, that she caused the death of a fond parent; while I, through Heaven's mercy, have never been subject to the temptation to create for myself a retrospect so dreadful."

It would be well, indeed, if all in a position likely to read these pages would remember, as did Ada Garden, when they are subjected to misfortune or suffering, that there are thousands around them in a far, far worse condition, deprived of all that can make life of value, without hope in this world or the next, and men they would never dare to arraign the dispensation of Providence, by which they receive the infliction from which they suffer, and would feel that even thus they are blessed above their fellows. Poor Ada saw that Marianna still slept, and, fearful lest Nina should require assistance, she was herself afraid of retiring to rest, though weariness made her head fall frequently on her bosom. At length she was aroused by a gentle knock at the door, and little Mila entered the room. She was evidently full of something which she wished to communicate, and told a long story, not a word of which Ada could understand. So eager had she been, that she did not perceive the condition to which Nina was reduced, believing that she was still asleep from simple fatigue, but her eye falling on her, she burst into loud lamentations of grief, which very nearly awoke her from the lethargy into which she had fallen. It was the means, however, of awaking Marianna, by whose aid she was able to make the little girl comprehend the importance of seeking out Paolo, and bringing him to attend on his sister. She was absent nearly two hours, but at length returned, accompanied by the Italian. Eager as Ada was to gain tidings of Fleetwood, she forbore to ask him any questions till he had recovered from the state of agitation into which he was thrown by seeing the condition of his unhappy sister.

"You need not tell me who has done this deed," he muttered, in a hoarse voice, as he bent over her. "I knew it would come to this — I knew, when weary of her, he would cast her aside as a child its broken toy, or would thus destroy her in his mad passion. Yet it would have been kinder had he struck deeper, and thus ended her misery with a blow. I have remained near her — I have watched over her, ill-treated and despised as I have been, — that, when this should be her fate, though I could not shield her from it, I might yet avenge her death. Yes, my sweet Nina, indifferent as you may deem me, I love you deeply."

"But, Signor Paolo," said Ada, not knowing how long he might continue in this strain, "your sister is still alive, and I trust that by the aid of your skill, her wound may neither be mortal nor of much consequence."

"Not mortal, lady," he said, bitterly; "and yet, I tell you, it would have killed her had it but scratched the skin. It is the spirit with which that dagger was cast will destroy her far quicker than the wound."

Ada now entreated him to examine into his sister's condition; and at length, grown more calm, he set skilfully about his office, and he confessed that, if fever did not set in, the wound was of slight importance.

When he was at liberty, Ada at last asked him to give her tidings of

Fleetwood; but he denied all knowledge of him, saying, that he had left him, with Raby watching him, at the fisherman's hut, and that on his return, both were gone, and that he could nowhere discover them.

Mila, now having an interpreter, came forward with her version of the story. She said she had heard that their chief had, on quitting the tower, come down to the bay in a state of passion, in which he had never before been seen, at the non-appearance of the two other prisoners, whom he vowed he would execute the moment they were discovered; that he had caused diligent search to be made for them in every direction, with the same want of success, till, at last a small boat belonging to the Zoe was found to be missing, in which it was, consequently, supposed they had escaped.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Ada, with a gleam of joy on her countenance, which showed how much her heart was relieved. "Oh, Signor Paolo, you know not how grateful I am to you for your generous assistance in the matter."

"Do not thank me, lady, nor believe that I knew of, or had any hand in the escape of your countrymen, if indeed they have escaped, of which I would entreat you not to be too sanguine," he replied; but, seeing the reaction his words were producing, he added, "and yet, remember, I have no reason to suppose that they are not in a place of safety. More I cannot say — and I beseech you not to ask me."

"But I have not told you all," interrupted little Mila, who guessed that he was no longer translating what she had said. "The moment the chief found that the boat was gone, he ordered as many men as she can carry to go on board the Zoe, and he himself accompanied them. She immediately set sail in pursuit, and they say that there is no doubt of the little boat being overtaken; and that even were he to meet the larger boats which made the attack on the island, the mistico will, without doubt, sink them all, and destroy everybody in them."

Paolo translated to Ada what Mila said, and the account again renewed her fears for Fleetwood's safety, though still she did not allow hope to abandon her.

It may seem that the Italian would have acted a more judicious part, had he not given the latter information; but he was unhappily himself influenced by two motives; the one right, and good, and generous — the spontaneous result of his better nature; the other arising from his yielding to temptation, which was selfish, mad, and wicked. The first prompted him to run every personal risk to save his rival from the pirate's anger; the other made him wish for his death, and eager to deprive him of the love of the fair English girl, whom, he still fancied he might save from Zappa's power, and win her for himself.

For the present, Paolo had a holy and absorbing employment for his mind, in tending his unhappy sister, who, under his judicious care, recovered, sooner than Ada had expected, from the effect of her wound, though she saw, too truly, that her words were verified, and that the weapon had struck deeper than the eye could reach.

Ada was now confined completely to the upper room of the tower, both because she would not quit her friend, and that she might avoid any risk of

encountering Zappa, who had taken up his abode in the lower part of it. Paolo was her only means of knowing what was going forward in the world without, and she felt an unwillingness to hold more communication with him than was absolutely necessary; indeed, nothing he said could dispel her fears.

The Zoe, it appeared, had been out all day; but an ominous silence had been kept as to the result of her expedition. Some said she had overtaken the boat, and brought back the prisoners; others, that the pirate had, in his rage, ordered the guns to be pointed down on her, and sunk her, with them on board; while, again, some asserted that the prisoners had not escaped from the island at all, and that they were concealed somewhere in it.

This conflicting evidence was little calculated to alleviate her anxiety; but her heart was fresh and young — her health and spirits were unbroken, and the air which was wafted through her casement was bright and pure, and she still hoped on for the best. Meantime the pirates were not idle; and she observed from her window, that they were engaged all day long in strengthening and improving the fortification of the castle, as well as those on the other side of the harbour. They threw up embankments, also, across the neck of land which joined the rock on which the castle stood, to the right of the island, and planted guns to defend the approach to it, as also a whole line along the cliff, which overlooked the entrance to the harbour.

Provisions of all sorts were got in from every part of the island, and huts were erected, in which to store them; for the men, themselves accustomed from their youth to the roughest life, cared not for shelter, so that there was little chance of their being compelled, by famine, to yield.

Nothing, indeed, was neglected, which might enable them to defend their stronghold against any force sent against it.

The Sea Hawk was also carefully refitted, and the two misticoes made ready for defence or flight.

The Zoe was again sent out to reconnoitre. She had been absent for two days, and the pirate began to be alarmed for her safety, and to argue that the enemy were probably approaching, and that she had fallen into her hands. All was, consequently, activity and excitement. The crew of the Sea Hawk went on board to man her, and those of the islanders destined to garrison the castle hurried up there with their arms ready for action. At length, a sail was discerned approaching the island, and she was soon pronounced to be the Zoe. Nearer and nearer she drew to the land, till there was no doubt of her identity, and as she entered the harbour, she was warmly greeted by those on shore, who hurried down to learn the news she brought. Her crew reported that they had visited the island when the English brig-of-war had last been seen, but she was not there, nor could they gain any tidings of her; but that they had, on the following day, when standing to the southward, made out three sails, which, from the squareness of their yards, they conjectured to be men-of-war, and that they were standing on a bowline to the eastward, with the wind at north, but that they deemed it imprudent to approach nearer to ascertain further

particulars.

This information prevented Zappa from taking a cruise in the Sea Hawk, as he had been intending, both to gain further intelligence of the enemy, and to pick up a few prizes to satisfy the impatience of his people, who began to murmur at the length of time which had passed since they had been engaged in what they considered useful activity, as well as to replace the property he had lost by the burning of his tower.

Ada had not neglected to inquire for the prisoners who had so severely suffered in her cause, and, though not allowed to communicate with them, she learned from Paolo that they were not treated with any unusual severity, farther than being confined in a chamber under ground, where very little light or air could penetrate, and that he believed their lives were in no danger.

Nina never spoke of the dreadful night when she had first felt the fierceness of her husband's anger; but her sunken eye, her hollow voice, and faded cheek, showed what the effect had been, though, when she met him, she tried to smile as of yore, and to attempt to win him to his better mood.

His followers, however, remarked that an ominous change had come over him, and that his mind at times seemed wavering on its throne.

The unhappy Paolo still nourished in silence his love for Ada, and day by day he allowed it to increase, till he could scarcely conceal his feelings in her presence.

It was night, and he stood where he had spent many an hour, on the cliff beneath her window. No moon was in the sky, and the stars were concealed by a canopy of clouds which hung over the sea, and the wind moaned amid the rocks and ruined buildings with a melancholy tone well consonant to his feelings.

Suddenly the perfect silence which had existed was broken by loud, terrific cries; the roar of cannon — the rattle of musketry — the cheers, and shrieks, and fierce imprecations of men striving in deadly combat; where had lately reigned silence and darkness, all was now the wildest confusion and uproar, and lighted up with the blaze of the death-dealing musketry.

The pirate rushed by, and entered Ada's tower, giving orders to his followers, the meaning of which no sooner did Paolo understand, than exclaiming, "Now is the time, or she is lost to me for ever," he hurried after him.

Chapter Thirty Five.

We left the Ione, at the dawn of a fine morning, beating up towards a small boat, which had been observed running to the westward, while a mistico was seen off the island, directly before the wind, apparently in chase of her. The boat, it was judged, was about half way between the two vessels; but then the Ione was nearly dead to leeward, while the mistico was directly to windward, though it was a question how far she would venture to chase the boat, or whether she would attempt to carry her off within range of the brig's guns.

As long as the mistico could keep well to windward, and out of gun-shot, from the closeness with which she could lay to the wind, and her fast sailing, she might carry off her prey, if such was her object, even before the eyes of those on board the English ship, without their being able to employ any means to prevent her so doing.

"Ah, the rascals know what they are about," said the master, as he watched the Greek vessel through his glass. "She is one of those piratical craft belonging to the nest of scoundrels on the island there, depend upon it; and they were trying to get hold of the boat, or to run her down, which they are just as likely to do as not, and then they'll be off again in the wind's eye, like a shot, before we can get up to them, and snug inside their rocks."

"I suspect you are right, master," said Saltwell. "And I cannot help thinking, also, that the boat has some of our friends on board. Would to Heaven the breeze would veer a few more points to the southward, and enable us to lay up to her before the mistico reaches her."

"I don't see what more we can do to go along faster," said the master. "Our canvas never stood better, nor did the brig ever make more way through the water with the same wind."

"The mistico draws very fast on the boat, and, by Jove, the villains are firing at her," exclaimed Saltwell, who had been again eagerly watching the chase through his glass. "Still she bravely holds her own. Oh, there's no doubt of her having our friends on board. See that the guns are ready, and cover her as soon as we get near enough; but we must take care not to hit the boat instead of the mistico."

The boat was now about two miles off, and the mistico threes. The former had only a sort of lug set; and, as well as could be seen at that distance, there was but the one person on board, who steered. If there were any others, they had wisely stowed themselves away at the bottom of the boat, to be more out of the reach of the enemy's shot. The breeze, though fresh, was not too strong to permit of her carrying her whole sail, and she flew rapidly before it; but the mistico went still faster, and, as Bill Hawkins, the captain of the fore-top, observed, —

"The little one looks for all the world like a small bird trying to escape from

a hawk just ready to pounce down on it, and I hope we shall just come in to play the big eagle, and save her out of its claws."

"She's the very same craft as we chased into harbour this blessed night, I shouldn't wonder," remarked Tom Derrick, who had been one of the cutter's crew. "It would be a real pleasure to get hold of her, to string up every one of the villains at the yard-arm, for wounding poor Mr Linton; I should be sorry, indeed, if he was to lose the number of his mess."

"So should I, old ship, and if ever we get an opportunity, won't we just pay off the murdering rascals for what they have done," said Hawkins. "My eyes, look there, how the big one is peppering the little chap; one would think she hadn't a whole plank left in her, and yet she stands on as bravely as if there warn't such a thing as a round-shot within a hundred miles of her."

Such was truly the case; the shot from the long guns of the mistico must have flown close over her, and on either side; and, probably, several had gone through her sail, but seemingly none had touched her hull. The Ione had now opened the mistico free of the boat to the northward.

"Stand by with the foremost starboard gun," cried Mr Saltwell, as they did so. This was a long nine of brass, while the other guns were carronades. "Fire!"

The gunner, who considered himself a first-rate marksman, pointed the gun, and the shot going well clear of the boat, struck the mistico on the quarter, and those who were watching her with their glasses declared that they could see the splinters flying from her. Still, so eager was she in the pursuit, that she would not haul her wind, seemingly determined not to do so till she had sunk the chase. This there appeared every chance that she would do, for she had now got awfully near her, and it was surprising that her small-arm men had not contrived to pick off the helmsman, when the boat would, of course, have broached to, and have been her own. Mr Saltwell again gave the order to fire as fast as the gun could be loaded and run out, but the skill of Mr Black did not shine so brilliantly as at the first attempt he made, though they went near enough to show the pirates what they were to expect if they persisted in their attempt.

"Have the larboard gun ready there. Hands about ship," cried the first lieutenant.

Bound came the brig, and the gun was let fly. The shot struck the mistico amidships, tearing away her gunnel, and creating the greatest confusion on board, if not destruction of life. She found that, in her eagerness, she had gone rather too far, and putting down her helm, she gave a last revengeful broadside at her tiny chase, as she hauled her wind, and away she stood on a bowline towards the island.

No sooner had she done so, than up sprung a figure in the stern sheets of the boat; and waving a cap round in his hand, seemed to be giving a cheer of derision. The incautious action was returned by the pirates with a discharge of their swivel guns, and a shower of musketry, and he dropped into the bottom of the boat.

"Poor fellow! the villains have killed him," exclaimed Mr Saltwell.

"Yes, sir; and I'm sorry to say I think from the figure it is Jack Raby. It is just the thing he would do, too," said Tompion, whose glass had been fixed on the boat at the time. "No — hurrah! the boat is standing on steadily with some one at the helm."

"Thank Heaven! so she is," exclaimed Saltwell. "Be ready there to heave the ship to, to let the boat come alongside."

In five minutes more the brig was close up to the boat, and, to the surprise of all, the person in the stern sheets, who had been so long visible, was found to be a stuffed figure, covered with a capote, and a Greek cap on the top of it, while the head of Jack Raby was seen cautiously peering above the gunnel. He very soon brought the boat alongside, when a couple of hands jumped in to assist him.

"What, Raby, my good fellow, who have you there?" exclaimed the master, who was standing at the gangway with several of the midshipmen, eager to welcome their messmate.

"I am sorry to say it is the captain, who is very badly hurt; but I was glad to get him off at any rate, for we've had a narrow escape of our lives," replied Raby, from the boat.

This announcement was received with an expression of grief from all on board. Saltwell, on hearing it, sprang to the gangway, to superintend the transfer of the captain to the deck, which was managed by lowering his own cot into the boat, and hoisting him up in it. He was somewhat revived, though he was scarcely sensible of what was occurring; and when he was carried below, all waited anxiously to hear the surgeon's report. In this anxiety about getting the captain on board, the mistico was for the time entirely forgotten; and when at last Saltwell thought of her, and ordered the foretop-sail to be again filled in chase, she had got so far to windward as to be again almost out of gun-shot. A few guns were fired after her, but the shot did not succeed in cutting away any of her spars or rigging, and she drew so fast ahead, that it was seen to be useless following her further.

The brig's helm was accordingly put up, and she stood away to the southward, towing after her Raby's boat, which was kept in case she should be required for a future occasion.

Everybody now crowded round Jack Raby, to learn from him all the events which had taken place; but Mr Saltwell summoned him, and made him go circumstantially over them to him, and he afterwards had to repeat them to all his messmates, and to the surgeon and purser, who had not heard them.

As the reader is already well acquainted with most of them, I need only commence when he began his account of his successful escape from the bay, in which it appeared that he was assisted by no other person than Paolo Montifalcone.

"You must know," he said, "that while the young Italian doctor was dressing the wounds, a fire broke out on the hill, above the bay, and the whole

population rushed off to see the fire. No sooner was the coast clear, than Paolo, as they called him, said to me, —

"'Now would be your time to escape, if you had anybody with you to manage a boat.'

"Of course, I told him that I could do that perfectly well by myself.

"'Well then,' he replied, 'Hasten down to the beach, you will there find a small boat which we passed on our way here. She has a sail in her, and oars, and if you are quick about it, you may get out of the harbour and join your friends before you are missed; and if you remain, you will be knocked on the head and thrown over the cliff, to a certainty.'

"'You don't mean to say that you expect me to run away and leave my captain to die hereby himself,' I exclaimed, ready to knock him down, for I saw that he was in earnest in his proposal, though the idea had only just occurred to him. 'A pretty blackguard I shall be, indeed.'

"'But I tell you he cannot live, and you will be sacrificed if you remain,' he argued.

"'I tell you what it is, Signor Paolo,' I replied; 'a midshipman's life is not reckoned of much value at the best, and I am not going to do a dirty action to save mine, I can tell you. I'm much obliged to you for what you have done, and for your good intentions; but if the captain is to die, why it will be a consolation to him to die under the British flag, on board his own ship, and if you will lend me a hand to carry him down to the boat, why I can just as easy escape with him on board as by myself. I'll trouble you also for some of your physic, and some lint and bandages, to doctor him with, and I hope he may yet do well.'

"The Italian was silent for a few moments, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he replied that he would do as I wished, though he warned me of the risk to which I was exposing the captain's life by so doing; but as he had just told me he would die on shore, I did not listen to him — in fact, I had no great confidence in the honesty of Signor Paolo. There was something in his eye, as he looked at the captain, which I did not like, and besides, I should like to know how any respectable man came to be herding with such a set of cut-throat rascals. I accordingly went outside the hut, to see how the coast lay, and I found that all was silent round us, for every man, woman, and child had gone up to the fire; and had it not been for the glare of the conflagration, the night would have been pitchy dark; so, lifting the captain up in a cloak on which he had been laid, Paolo taking the head and I the feet, we bore him, as well as we were able, down to the boat, though I was afraid every moment of letting him fall, and hurting him; indeed, nothing but the anxiety I felt would have enabled me to succeed. At length we reached the boat, and placing the captain at the bottom, I again thanked the Italian for the service he had rendered us; indeed, after all, I was afraid I was wronging him by my suspicions. Then, with a lighter heart than I had felt for some hours, I got him to assist me in shoving the boat off the beach, and with the impetus he had given her I let her drift out into the harbour. I then, as silently as I could, paddled round by the west shore, keeping

clear of the brig and the two misticoes, for the one which chased us had just come in; but I had not much fear of any of them, for I knew that the few hands left on board them would be looking up at the fire, and would not observe me: though, had any one turned, they might have done so, for the bright glare from the flames fell on the boat, and would have showed her distinctly, even right across the bay. Anxious as I was to get out of the harbour, I was afraid of pulling hard, lest any one should hear the splash of the oars; and so near was I to the vessels, that every instant I expected that the alarm would be given, and that a shot would be sent right into the boat. Fortunately, no one saw me, and it was indeed a pleasant moment to me, when finding the chain lowered, I rounded the west side of the harbour, and pulled fairly out to sea. I had not hitherto been perceived; but still it was necessary to be very cautious, for, of course, I thought the pirates would be keeping a lookout, lest any of our boats might again attempt to approach the harbour, so I pulled on as hard as I could, for I no longer feared making a noise, till my arms ached so much that I could pull no longer. I then laid in my oars, and though I fancied I could still hear the voice of the people on shore, I was so far to westward that I did not think the light would be reflected on the sail, even were I to set it. I therefore stepped the mast, not without some difficulty — fortunately, the sea was smooth, or I could not have done it at all — and got the sail ready for hoisting. Before doing so, I stooped down to examine how the captain was going on, and tried to place him in a somewhat more comfortable position. His heart seemed to beat regularly, and though he was still unconscious, from the wound in his head, he did not seem to have any fever about him. This raised my spirits, and I began to hope for the best. I did not much like to give him any of Signor Paolo's doctor stuff, for at the best I have not much faith in it, and I have heard that those Italian chaps are much given to poisonous practices, so I hove it overboard, to be out of the way, and then hoisted my sail, and went aft to the helm. The breeze was still from the eastward, and I thought by keeping dead before it, I should make the island, where I expected to find you brought up. I considered that the boat was going about three knots an hour through the water; and when I had been out, as I calculated, about that time, I heard three guns fired, somewhere from the island, or near it. This did not give me any concern, and I steered steadily on, wishing for daylight, that I might see the island or you, in case you were off here, till at last, just as it came, and I was looking astern to see it, the first streaks had appeared in the sky, I beheld, to my dismay, a sail, which I was certain must be one of the pirate misticoes, running right down for me. Well, thought I to myself, it's all up with the captain and me; but never say die, while there's a shot in the locker, so I held on my course. It was not long, however, before my eyes fell on your topsails, rising out of the sea, and glad enough I was, you may be sure, when you made sail and stood towards me, for then I knew that I was seen. The rascally mistico was overhauling me fast, though, and as I feared she would get me within range of her guns before you could reach me, I thought I would give them something to shoot at instead of my head, so I

rigged up a figure with a capote and cap, which I found in the boat, and stuck it up in the stern, and there fitting some lines on to the tiller, I made a berth for myself at the bottom of the boat to stow myself away in, as soon as they began to fire. It's lucky I did so, for if I had had nine lives, like a cat, I should have lost them all; and what would have been worse, the captain would have been retaken. My eyes, how the blackguards peppered at me; but you know all about that, and now, to my mind, the sooner we set to work to pay them off, and to get Miss Garden out of their hands, the better."

This account was given by Jack Raby in his berth to his messmates, that narrated to the first lieutenant was more concise, without his own remarks on the subjects; for instance, he left out how often he had kissed Marianna — and how often he had tried to learn Romaic of little Mila, and made love on the strength of it — though, to his messmates, he enlarged much on these points, and hinted that he had completely won the heart of the old pirate's granddaughter, whom he described as a perfect angel in a red cap.

It was with almost a cheer of joy, and many a sincere thanksgiving to Heaven, and a glistening of many a manly eye, that, some days afterwards, the news flew along the decks that the surgeon had positively declared that the captain was out of danger, and would soon again be fit for duty.

Mr Linton had, notwithstanding his own prognostications, very much improved; and, though still confined to his berth, there was every probability of his soon recovering.

The Ypsilante had in the mean time been dispatched to summon any British ships she could meet, to the assistance of Captain Fleetwood; who, to strengthen his claim for their cooperation — for, as a junior officer, of course he could not order them to come to him — sent by her an account of the atrocities committed by the Sea Hawk; and a statement that an English lady and her attendant were held in durance vile by the pirates, which he justly calculated would excite all the chivalric feelings of his brother-captains, for which the British navy are so justly celebrated.

He, meantime, cruised in the neighbourhood of the island, in the hope, should she attempt to make her escape, of falling in with and capturing the Sea Hawk.

Chapter Thirty Six.

Captain Fleetwood once more trod the deck of the Ione; and though his cheek was pale, and his step had not regained its usual firmness, nor his voice its strength, his health was almost re-established, and grief, more than any other cause, prevented him from entirely recovering. Linton had also returned to his duty, and had produced several poetical effusions on the subject of the fate he had anticipated for himself, productions which he threatened to inflict on his brother-officers; but, as they earnestly entreated him to keep them fresh for those who could better appreciate them, he locked the papers up again in his desk — the purser, however, who did not intend to pay him a compliment at the expense of the rest, assuring him that it would be like casting pearls before swine.

The officers had just come up on deck from breakfast, and the captain was pacing the poop with his first-lieutenant by his side, the sea was smooth, with a light air from the westward, and the brig, under her topsails, was standing to the northward — in which direction lay the pirates' island, appearing in the distant horizon like a blue hillock rising out of the water.

"Sail, ho!" was the welcome sound which reached the deck from the mast-head.

The usual question of "Where away?" was put by Mr Saltwell, in return.

"On the larboard quarter, sir," was the answer.

"What does she look like?"

"A ship right before the wind, sir."

"I trust she is a friend come to our assistance," said Captain Fleetwood. "We'll stand down to meet her. Put the ship about, Mr Saltwell."

The brig having tacked, now stood under the same easy sail as before, to the southward, so as to cut off the stranger; a bright look-out being still kept astern, lest the Sea Hawk, or either of her tenders, should appear on the northern board.

It may easily be supposed how anxiously Captain Fleetwood had been expecting the arrival of some other cruiser to assist him in making the attack he contemplated on the island. Had he consulted his own inclinations, he would, as soon as he was able to grasp his sword, have attempted the exploit with his own ship's company, whom he well knew would be ready to follow him; but he was unwilling to risk the lives of his gallant fellows on so very hazardous an expedition — especially after the sad lesson he had lately experienced — and the suffering, if not the destruction, to which he had subjected his brave companions.

Were he to make the attack and fail, he also thought the result would be too dreadful to contemplate; so he curbed his impatience as he was best able, till he could collect a sufficient force to enable him to undertake it with a certainty of

success. He tried also to console himself with the hopes that the Signora Nina and her brother would protect Ada to the utmost of their power. Raby, wisely, had not told him his suspicions of Paolo — and, of course, he was ignorant of the events which had occurred in the island after he had been carried off, or he would certainly have been even less at his ease than he endeavoured to make himself.

"What do you make her out to be?" he inquired of Mr Saltwell, who had just descended from aloft, with his spy-glass over his shoulder.

"English, I think, sir. I could see to the head of her courses, and, I should not be surprised, from the look of her canvas, that she is the Vesta frigate, which was to be cruising somewhere off the Gulf of Egina."

"I trust she may be. Captain Grantham is an old friend of mine, and I know that if he received my letter he would come, if he possibly could; and welcome he will be; for, though the Vesta is but an eight-and-twenty, we may do without further aid."

Sail after sail of the stranger rose out of the blue water, till a towering mass of snow-white canvas floated above it, shining brilliantly in the rays of the forenoon sun, which fell directly on it. At last, the dark hull and bow ports, and even the thin line of glowing copper below the bends, could be perceived, and little doubt remained of the identity of the ship in sight; though, from her position, her signals could not be perceived. Had it been war time, the Ione would not have allowed a ship, so far her superior in size, to approach, without greater caution in ascertaining her nation; but, as it was, there was no danger of her proving an enemy, and, at the worst, she could be but a neutral.

While the matter was still in doubt, another sail was seen astern of her, standing in the same direction; and, in a little time afterwards, the frigate took in her studden sails, clewed up her courses, and bracing up her yards, rounded to, when the Vesta's number blew out clearly to view.

The brig, now close to her, also backed her main topsail, when the captain's gig was piped away, and Fleetwood, with a heart less depressed than he had long felt, went on board the frigate.

He was warmly received by Captain Grantham, who exclaimed, "I am delighted to see you, Fleetwood. From the accounts we received we thought it was all up with you; and I came more with the hope of avenging you, than of seeing you alive; but now you shall have that satisfaction yourself. By Jove! we must blow up the hornet's nest without delay. When did you propose to make the attempt?"

"The very moment a sufficient force was collected," replied Fleetwood, highly gratified at his friend's zeal.

"Well, what do you say to this very night?" asked Grantham. "There is the Venus coming up after me, and your Greek friend cannot be far off. I am afraid she is not likely to meet any other ship of the squadron; but we are enough, as it is, to drive every one of the rascals into the sea."

"To-night, by all means," exclaimed Fleetwood. "I could not have hoped for

anything better. We shall have a sufficient force to ensure success; and as there is no moon till a late hour, we shall have less risk of discovery before we are upon them."

"Then to-night let it be; and I suppose there's no use insisting on your remaining on board, on account of your illness, and letting Rawson, of the Venus, lead the attack," said Captain Grantham. "He is a gallant fellow, and will do it well."

"I trust, Grantham, that you will give the command of the expedition to me. I shall, indeed esteem it a most especial favour if you will do so," pleaded Fleetwood. "I would, on no account, if I can help it, lose that post."

"Well, I suppose, under the circumstances of the case, we must persuade Rawson to keep the ship, though, indeed, Fleetwood, I do not think you are yet strong enough for the exertion you must go through."

"I have a Hercules of a coxswain, and I must make him carry me, if my legs fail me," said Fleetwood, smiling sadly. "But you know, Grantham, I have motives enough to carry me through anything."

"Yes, indeed, I know, and feel for you. I suppose the fellows will show fight."

"Not a doubt of it, from the specimen we have had of them. They know that they have no mercy to expect at our hands, and that they fight with ropes round their necks."

"We must give them enough of it, then; but I suppose, with the force we have collected, we shall have no great difficulty in forcing our way into the harbour I understand they have got there, though it seems to be well fortified."

"We should be blown to atoms if we attempted it in the boats," said Fleetwood. "You have no idea how strong the place is."

"How, in the name of goodness, are we to get at them, then?" exclaimed Captain Grantham, who was more celebrated for his dash at an enemy, when once he saw him, than for originating any plan where stratagem was required. "But let me hear what you propose to do."

"I have, as you may suppose, thought much on the subject, so I may claim for it more attention than I might otherwise venture to do," said Fleetwood. "I would on no account attempt to enter the harbour; but there is at the east end of the island a small cove, with an entrance so narrow that one boat can alone pass at a time."

He spoke of the one into which the Greek captain had steered the mistico, all the circumstances of which he explained.

"Now, I propose," he continued, "that the three English ships should stand towards the place, as soon as it is dark, and there is no chance of our being seen from the shore, while the Ypsilante I will employ in another way. We will bring up close in shore, and have all the boats ready to drop into the water, at the same moment. I will lead in the Tone's cutter, and, with my men, will mount by the concealed passage, and secure the approach to the summit of the cliff. When this important point is gained, the other boats can enter; and Raby, who knows the passage, will lead the main body through it. We will then proceed, as

silently as we can, to the causeway, across which we must make a dash, and, I hope, may take the pirates by surprise. I would send the Ypsilante, meantime, to approach the harbour; and when we reach the causeway, we will throw up a rocket, and she must commence a feigned attack on the mouth of the harbour, blazing away as hard as she can. This will distract the attention of the pirates, and make them fancy that they have most to fear from their enemies on that side. As soon as she opens her fire, we will rush on; and as the Greeks will have hurried to the defences of the fort towards the harbour, I hope that we may have an easy victory."

"I like your plan very much, and it has my hearty concurrence, as I have no doubt it will have Rawson's," said Captain Grantham. "We shall soon have him up with us, and when he comes on board you can explain your proposal. The Venus should be near us by this time." He rang his bell, and the steward appeared. "Mason, learn from the officer of the watch how soon the Venus will be up with us, and beg him to signalise her captain to come on board."

"She's close to us now, sir," said Mason, as he went to fulfil the rest of the order.

In about a quarter of an hour, Captain Rawson was ushered into the cabin. He was a short, fat man, with a large, round, red, good-natured countenance, and if he was a fire-eater, as he had the character of being, he certainly did not look like one, except it might be supposed that the ruddy hue on his cheeks could have arisen from that cause. He shook the hands of his brother-captains, as if he would have wrung them off, and then threw himself into a chair to recover from his exertions; but, when he began to speak, instead of the rough voice one might have expected, a soft, mellifluous tone was heard, which might better win a woman's ear than vie with the howling of the tempest. He at once waived all the right he might claim to lead the attack on the island, and cordially agreed to the plan proposed by Captain Fleetwood.

"In fact," he said, laughing, "there is no great credit due to me, Fleetwood; for I would much rather fight a ship twice the size of my own with the deck under my feet, than have to scramble up such a place as you describe, on a pitch-dark night, to thrash a few scoundrels of pirates."

"If I don't mistake, you tried the first, and with no little success," observed Grantham.

"Oh, yes! that was when I was first lieutenant of the Pan, eighteen-gun sloop, and the captain being ill below, we fell in with the French thirty-gun frigate, Liberté, and instead of her taking us, as she expected, we not only beat her off, but gave her such a drubbing, that if we had carried as long guns as she did, we should have made her our prize. But I'm afraid, Grantham, neither you nor I will see any more of that fun. Well, we've had a good deal of it in our day, and have no right to complain."

The friends, in talking over the adventures of the past, would very likely have forgotten what Fleetwood considered the much more important present, when they were interrupted by the entrance of a midshipman, who brought the

agreeable intelligence that a sail, supposed to be the Ypsilante, was in sight to windward.

"Huzza, then!" exclaimed Rawson. "We shall have all your plan complete, Fleetwood, — and you think those fellows will fight? Well, on my word, I should much like to bear you company if it was not for the hill — mind, only as a volunteer though — I will keep alongside your friend, Colonel Gauntlett."

Seldom had an expedition been undertaken under better auspices than that to rescue Ada Garden and her companions, and to punish the pirate. The night was very dark, and the breeze was just sufficient to enable the ships of war to get up to their anchorage at the proper time, while being from the west, or rather from the northward of it, the sea was perfectly smooth, which would enable the boats to enter the little bay without danger.

As the dusk came on the little squadron hauled up for the island, the Greek brig standing for the port, the others keeping more to the eastward; the former had, however, sent two of her boats to accompany the Ione, and to assist in landing the men, thus rendering herself rather short handed; but, as she had only to make a feint of attacking, this was not considered of any importance, nor was it supposed for a moment that the Sea Hawk would, or even could, make an attempt to quit the harbour in face of so superior a force.

It was so dark that it was scarcely possible to distinguish the shore; but Fleetwood, who led in the Ione, as she was the smallest vessel, kept the lead going, and, as he knew the coast, he had no fears. As he thought of the certain result of the expedition, and the unspeakable joy of releasing Ada, and bearing her off in triumph from the pirates' island, the depression of spirits, from which he had so long suffered, wore off entirely, and every moment which intervened seemed an age in his sight.

"I am delighted to see you looking so well, my dear sir," said Colonel Gauntlett, as, before getting close in with the land, they sat at table with some refreshment before them, of which, by the by, the captain took but little, though his guest did ample justice to it. "I must claim a post next to you, with Mitchell as my body-guard, and we must make it our business to find out my poor niece as soon as we get into the port. You will have to attend to the business of thrashing the pirates, and taking possession of the place, you must remember, so it is fortunate you have some one to assist you in rescuing the prisoners."

"I shall be glad, indeed, to have some one with whom to place Miss Garden, as soon as she is released; but I expect that I shall be called on to perform that grateful duty at the head of my men, for round her tower, probably, the greatest resistance will be made by the pirates."

"Well, then, my boy, we'll keep together — we'll keep together, and you'll find, I hope, that an old soldier is no bad ally!" exclaimed the colonel with animation. "And now, Mitchell," (he was standing behind his master's chair, his head pressed against the deck above, and the tip of his nose just appearing from under a beam, which entirely concealed his eyes), "let me have another look at

my arms. There's nothing like having one's weapons in order on an expedition of this kind, depend upon it, Captain Fleetwood. A good general always takes care that his army is well supplied with munitions of war."

While he was speaking, Mitchell brought forth from his cabin his sword and two brace of pistols, which he placed on the table. The old soldier drew his sword from its scabbard, and regarded it with a look of the greatest affection. He turned it round to the light, to see that no rust had rested on it, and then pressed its point on the deck, and let it spring up again, to assure himself that it had not lost its pliancy.

"Ah!" he said, "this and my pistols were the only things I saved from the wreck of the Zodiac and the Frenchman; for I hold that no soldier should part with his sword till the last extremity. An old friend, too, and served with me right through the campaigns in the Peninsula, till the crowning fight of Waterloo. I have reason to be proud of it, Captain Fleetwood."

"Indeed you have, sir; and I have no doubt that it will do good service to-night," said the captain.

"I hope so; and, Mitchell, recollect the same orders as I have often before given you — never let this sword be left behind, should my arm lose the power of using it."

"Yes, your honour," said Mitchell, with all the gravity of a mute, putting his hand to the beam, as he could not reach his forehead. "I'll not forget."

The captain, followed by his guest, went on deck, and, in about half an hour, the brig he considered was near enough in to anchor. A light shown over the taffrail was the signal of what he was about to do, and as he clewed up his sails, his consorts followed his example, and all three dropped their anchors within a short distance of each other — the frigate being on the outside. Not a light was allowed to be shown, lest it might be observed by any sleepless eye on shore — and as little noise as possible was made, lest any ear might hear it.

The moment the anchors were let go, the boats were got out and manned, and rapidly collected round the Ione.

Fleetwood then summoned the officers, commanding them, into his cabin, where, on the table, was spread out a rough sketch of the part of the island across which they would have to proceed, and of the port and harbour; and he then repeated briefly the plan of the attack, and assigned to each his particular duties.

The frigate and corvette had each sent two lieutenants; and Linton insisted on being as well able to undergo the fatigue as his captain; the rest of the boats were commanded by the mates and midshipmen. Tompion had the jolly boat, and Jack Raby the gig, while the frigate sent also her lieutenant of marines to command those of the other messes.

"Now, gentlemen, you clearly understand my wishes. I will go in first, and climb to the top of the cliffs, and five minutes afterwards, Mr Raby, who knows the place well, will lead in the Tone's gig, and show you the way to follow me, unless I should be attacked; and even then, do not come to my assistance till I

call you. I need scarcely caution you to preserve the strictest silence among your men to the last moment — indeed, till we are actually upon the enemy; and could we surround, and take possession of the tower you see marked there, it would be of the most vital importance, though I fear the pirates will keep too brisk a watch to allow us to get thus far without discovery; and now, the quicker we set about the work the better."

Everybody expressed their full comprehension of Captain Fleetwood's directions, and he led the way on deck, followed by Colonel Gauntlett and Mitchell, and descended to his boat. There his big coxswain, Tommy Small, was waiting for him. Small had charge of the signal rocket, which the captain had, however, determined not to let off, unless they were first discovered by the pirates.

One by one the other officers stepped silently into their boats as they dropped alongside, and, with muffled oars, shoved off after the gig; and no one, two cables' length off the ships, would have supposed that nearly two hundred armed men were about to land on the coast.

Fleetwood's heart beat quick as he approached the shore, he felt sure that he could not have mistaken the spot; but still very great caution was necessary; and the entrance between the rocks was so narrow, that, even in the day time, it was difficult to find. Twice he pulled up to the black towering rocks, and was obliged to back off again disappointed in finding the passage. High above their heads they rose, looking like some impenetrable wall, the confines to a world.

"Give way again, my lads," he whispered. "Port the helm a little, Small. That will do; I see it on the starboard bow. Now, give way gently, my men. In with your oars."

And the boat was seen to disappear, as it were, into the very rocks. She glided, however, between them, and slid with a slight grating noise on to the soft sand, close to where still lay the mistico, which it seemed the pirates had not got off. All hands jumped out, with the exception of the boat-keepers, and Captain Fleetwood lost not a moment in leading the way to the cavern, which he feared to find blocked up. With cautious steps he groped his way to it, and to his great satisfaction discovered that it was open, and feeling for the steps he ascended them.

"Pass the word along for all hands to keep their left shoulders against the cliff, and there is no fear," he whispered to Small, who followed him closely with his drawn cutlass, ready to guard him from any who might attack him.

This was, perhaps, the most hazardous part of the undertaking, for two or three resolute men stationed at the top might have kept the whole party at bay, or, indeed, have tumbled them all headlong down the cliffs. He well knew the cunning of the Greeks, and should they have discovered the ship by any chance, this was the point they would defend, in the hopes of destroying all those engaged in the expedition together. Darkness was around them, the rugged cliff on one side, a precipice on the other, and beneath their feet a steep path or rough steps, and yet no one hesitated to follow where he led. The most perfect

silence reigned over the scene, except the sound of their tread, which could just be heard above the dash of the water on the rocks below, and the scream of some wild sea-bird as it winged its flight at a distance through the calm night-air. On he went — a few more steps would place him on the summit of the cliff, in comparative safety. His hand touched the grass at the very edge of the upper step — he sprang upwards and gained a footing on the top — he breathed more freely, and his followers, one by one, ascended and took their place by him. He then advanced a little distance to defend the position and to allow the rest of the party space to assemble as they came up. The five minutes passed away, and Raby led on, followed in a line by the other boats, for there was no room for two to pass abreast, and as they entered they all ran up side by side on the beach. Raby led them with the same good success as his captain, though the marines with their muskets had some difficulty in getting up, and ran no little risk of falling over again; but no casualty occurred. It was, however, a long business, thus getting up in a single file at so slow a pace, but at last the whole body were drawn up together. Captain Fleetwood, for greater convenience, separated them into two divisions, he leading the first, and Jack Raby, who was delighted with his own importance, acting at; guide to the second. It wanted just half an hour to midnight when they were put in motion. He found the greatest difficulty in passing over the rough ground, and keeping the direct path near the cliff, without the risk of some of his followers slipping from the precipice to their left. He had, it must be remembered, gone over the same path several times in the day, and once on the night of his attempted escape, when he and his friends went to get the rope, and the arms, and provisions, or it would have been almost impossible for him to find the way. On the party went, silent as the dead, and though the sound of the marines' heavy and regular tread might have been heard at a distance, had any one been on the watch for them, the footsteps of the blue-jackets, as they sprang from rock to rock, were light almost as those of Indian warriors on any similar exploit. The weather, which had hitherto been serene, with a gentle and balmy breeze blowing from the west, now gave symptoms of being about to undergo a change. A low moaning sound was heard as the night wind blew among the pointed rocks, and it struck with the chilly feel of the north on the right cheeks of the adventurers. It served, however, rather to raise their spirits and strengthen their muscles; they knew that their ships were in safety, if the anchorage was tolerable on the lee side of the island, so they thought or cared little about the matter.

Two miles had thus to be travelled, every instant expecting discovery; for it was scarcely to be supposed that the pirates, after their late deeds, would not be on their guard against an attack. Now Fleetwood halted and listened, now he had literally to feel his way with the point of his sword, lest he should have inadvertently gone too close to the edge of the cliff, and in this manner upwards of an hour had passed away, slowly, indeed, to those eager to know the result. At length, with a beating heart, he stood on the causeway, while a tower, the one in which he believed Ada was to be found, was faintly perceptible,

rising, like some tall spectre, in the gloom before him. A light for an instant glimmered through a casement of the story in which she resided — it was to him the beacon of his hopes, and served to confirm him in the belief that he had reached the approach to the castle, of which, otherwise, he was somewhat uncertain.

"Shall I let off the rocket, sir?" whispered Tommy Small, who had kept close to him all the time, ready to support him had he stumbled. They were the first words which had been spoken since the heights had been gained.

"Not till the enemy discovers us," answered his captain — "then fire."

He had been careful not to halt his men; for he had often observed, that while the actual tread, from breaking gradually on the ear, might not be noticed, the stop and the fresh start were nearly always heard. On a sudden, however, he met with an impediment he had not expected — a high embankment ran directly across the causeway, with a ditch before it. To slip down the side of the ditch, and to climb the opposite bank, was, to seamen, the work of a moment, and, without being discovered, the first few stood on the summit. Some noise, however, scarcely to be heard, was made, and as Captain Fleetwood, with Small on one side, closely followed by the gallant old colonel, was on the point of leaping down into the ramparts, they found themselves confronted by a number of the islanders, who started up from between the guns, where they had been sleeping.

To fire the pistols was the first impulse of the pirates, and the flash aroused their comrades, as well as showed them to their assailants, who dashed down among them before they had time to unsheath their swords, and cut them down without mercy.

"Now, Small, off with the rocket," exclaimed Captain Fleetwood, as their first opponents were disposed of.

At the word, the coxswain, who had been expecting the order, let the beautiful firework fly into the air. Up it soared, making a curve towards the sea, into which it sent down a shower of glittering sparks, which had scarcely been extinguished before the Ypsilante, in gallant style, opened her fire on the harbour, making as much blaze and noise as she could. The British seamen, believing that all necessity for further silence was at an end, gave three hearty, soul-stirring cheers, which rung among the rocks, even above the roar of the artillery, and they then rushed on into the fosse after their companions. The sound, though it struck a panic into the hearts of the more timid of the pirates, at the same time showed them where the most imminent danger lay. The chain was across the harbour, and they knew no vessel could enter, and that their guns on that side would sink her when she attempted it, so many of the bravest hurried to the causeway, to defend the approach to the fort, while others manned the guns above the harbour, and began to return with interest the fire of the Greek brig.

All was now uproar, confusion, fire, smoke, shrieks, shouts, and curses — the roar of the brig's guns, and the sharp reports of fire-arms. The latter,

however, were but little used by the English, who trusted more to their cutlasses and the points of their bayonets.

The defenders of the causeway fought with the greatest bravery, the voice of their chief encouraging them to persevere, and none gave way till they were cut down or slain. The British poured on in overwhelming force, but still the pirates struggled obstinately, strengthened by the arrival of their comrades from other parts.

Fleetwood and Colonel Gauntlett both knew the voice of Zappa.

"On, on," they exclaimed, trying to cut their way up to the spot, where at intervals, as pistols were flashing near him, they could see him flying from spot to spot, and encouraging his men, "Seize that man, their chief — take him alive!"

The seamen did their best to come at him, but his followers, with a devotion worthy of a better object, rallying round him, kept them at bay. At last the voice which had been heard so loud was silent, and though fire-arms flashed on each side, his figure was not to be seen. Yet the pirates did not give way, they even seemed to fight with more desperation than before, as if to make amends for his absence, or to revenge his loss. Nothing, however, could withstand the determined courage of the English; though, had not the pirates incautiously lost the post which Zappa had so judiciously formed, they might, perhaps, have been kept at bay till daylight, and, at all events, must have suffered a severe loss.

Fleetwood and the other officers encouraged their men to fresh exertions, and led the way. The pirates could no longer withstand the onset, and, within five minutes after they had leaped the ramparts, the British had gained the open space under the fort, and the enemy were flying in all directions before them, some to conceal themselves among the ruins, others throwing themselves over the cliffs, to avoid, as they supposed, another death; and the greater number, still facing round, retreating by the path down the ravine. A small, but more desperate, band, under old Vlacco, not active enough to run, and too brave to yield, had entrenched themselves among the ruins, on the point directly above the harbour; and while some of them were firing away on the Ypsilante, and thus defending to the last the entrance to their port, the rest had slewed round some of the smaller guns towards the interior of the fort, prepared to fire the moment they could distinguish their enemies from their friends.

Meantime, Charles Fleetwood, eager in pursuit of the great object which had at first brought him to the island, the rescue of Ada Garden, led on his men to the tower. He heard the scream of a female, — the gate was open — he rushed up the steps, followed by the colonel and several others — he reached the chamber she had inhabited, a light burnt on the table — it showed the confusion around; a slight form was on one of the couches — Fleetwood flew to it. Could it be his Ada?

There he beheld a sight to sicken his heart — it was the body of poor little

Mila: a ball had entered her forehead, and, as in too many cases, the innocent life had been taken. What might be the fate of her he loved best? His eye fell on Marianna, who was kneeling on the ground in an agony of terror. She lifted her head with alarm, expecting that some of the pirates had entered to wreak their vengeance on her; but when she saw who it was, she gave a shriek of delight, exclaiming, —

"Oh! save my mistress, signor captain, — save my poor mistress. They have carried her away — the traitor, the false man, Signor Paolo — he and the chief. You will never see her more."

"Where, where! which way, girl, speak?" cried Fleetwood, with feelings which no words can in any degree express.

"Oh! I don't know, signor," answered the Maltese girl, weeping with fright and agitation, increased by the tone of his voice. "Down through the door, signor, she and Signora Nina."

"But, my girl, did they neither speak nor say where they were going?" asked Fleetwood.

"Oh! yes, yes. They said the Sea Hawk, — the Sea Hawk. They will escape. Oh, Mother of Heaven! have mercy on us," replied Marianna, through her tears.

"Enough. Down the ravine, my men. Follow me," shouted Fleetwood, as he rushed down the steps. "Colonel, do you remain at this tower, and prevent the pirates entering, if any rally."

At the bottom he fortunately met Dawson, the first lieutenant of the Vesta, and second in command.

"Dawson," he exclaimed, "take charge of the high ground with half our men, and clear the point there of those fellows firing down on the harbour. The first division follow me: on, my men!"

Uttering these words, he led the way to the path winding down the ravine, followed eagerly by seventy or eighty of the blue jackets. As may be supposed, he flew rather than ran, and even Tommy Small could scarcely keep up with him. He had too good a cause to know the path, every turning of which he had noted with the greatest care, so he had no fear of missing his way. As he went on, he found the wind blowing strongly down the ravine; and this circumstance showed him, to his sorrow, that the Sea Hawk would have no difficulty in running out of the harbour, if the Ypsilante did not prevent her. Still the pirate could only have had a short start of him. All he could do was to shout, "On, on," and to wish, though in vain, that he could move faster.

He might yet reach the shore, even before the boats could shove off, and Ada might be rescued. This thought supported him. The wind rapidly increased, and its howl was heard even above the shouts of his followers. At length he reached the shores of the bay; he rushed to the edge; he could distinguish some boats floating on the surface of the water, and further on, there was a sound as if men were engaged in shoving others into it; yet he dared not allow any one to fire, for he could not tell what boat might contain his Ada. He led on his party in that direction. The pirates had seen him, and defended themselves bravely.

Some sacrificed themselves while their comrades were escaping, and, by the time they were overpowered, only three boats remained on the shore. Into these, Fleetwood did not for a moment hesitate to throw himself as soon as they were launched, with as many of his men as they could contain, but the oars of two only could be found, and in vain were those of the other hunted for. With a hearty cheer the gallant fellows gave way after the enemy. The retreating pirates fired on them as they advanced out into the bay. He could just distinguish, by the flashes of the guns, the brig, and the two misticoes in the centre of it. As he looked, their sails were loosened and swelled to the gale; the pirates waited not to secure their boats, as they leaped on board. The cables were cut, and the two misticos darted out through the narrow passage into the open sea. Old Vlacco must have known what they were about, for the fire from the fort towards the Ypsilante seemed to be redoubled in warmth, preventing her from aiming at them as well as she might have done.

The Sea Hawk had still several boats round her, and towards her Fleetwood now steered. His men urged on the boat to their utmost strength; he felt a hope that he might reach her, when her fore-topsail was let fall, and sheeted home. A spring was on her cable, her head turned rapidly round, her yards were squared away, the cable cut, and she darted out from among a crowd of boats, among which she left the English entangled, just as they were on the point of running alongside her, and following her tenders out to sea, discharging her broadside full at the Ypsilante, as she passed her. The Greek behaved gallantly, and instantly put up her helm, and bore away in chase.

Fleetwood, his heart almost broker with agony at his disappointment, saw that it would be in vain for him to pursue, and he also remembered that the Ypsilante, with her reduced crew, and severely handled as she had been by the fort, was in no way a match for the Sea Hawk, though her shot might injure her, who was, he feared, on board.

There was, however, a doubt, on board which of the vessels Ada had been carried, if she really had again been torn, almost as it were, from his arms, and he dared not entertain a hope to the contrary.

Quick in action as in thought, these ideas passed through his mind as he returned to the shore, with the purpose of hastening back to the ships, and getting them to start in chase of the pirates.

At least, he thought, the Ypsilante will know what direction the Sea Hawk has taken, and be able to direct us in the pursuit. Before, however, he could return to his ship, he had numerous important duties to perform as leader of the expedition, and, indeed, from the firing which still continued on the heights, he saw that even the fort was not yet entirely their own.

For him the great object of the enterprise had failed, totally, miserably failed. Not only was Ada Garden again lost, but she would certainly be placed in a position infinitely worse than that in which she had hitherto been. He scarcely dared to think what act the pirate might commit, now that he was driven to desperation; she had no longer her attendant with her, and the

Signora Nina might have lost the little influence over him she had before possessed. He bitterly cursed the mistake he had made in not dispatching one at least of the British ships round to assist the Ypsilante in blockading the entrance; but he checked himself, as it occurred to him that, had he done so, Ada might have been placed in still greater peril, as Zappa might still have attempted to carry her off, and, on finding himself completely entrapped, without a hope of escape, might have blown up the Sea Hawk, with all on board her, and he remembered the principle which had often sustained him through adversity and sorrow, though he could not accuse himself of having, through his own conduct, brought on the misfortune, or the cause of grief, that Heaven ordains everything for the best, and that it is impious to repine at its decrees. With a far different feeling did he climb up the path than that with which he had rushed down it, and though his spirits, disappointed and agitated as he was, did not fail him, his bodily strength almost did, and, had it not been for Small, he would scarcely have accomplished the undertaking against the fierce gale which was blowing down the ravine.

As they climbed up, the occasional roar of the big guns, and the rattle of musketry, was still heard, and on the summit a sight met his view which he had scarcely expected, and which grieved him sorely. Some of the huts I mentioned as having been built to contain the pirates' provisions and other stores, had caught fire, and lighted up the whole scene. Hedged up on the outer promontory were the band of islanders, under old Vlacco, who, without the remotest prospect of victory or escape, yet refused to yield or ask for quarter. The old pirate had saved his chief; he had enabled him to escape by the gallant way he had held the post. He was now fighting on his own account for revenge, and to sell his life as dearly as he could. He was determined the victory the British had obtained should not be bought cheaply; he and his men worked the guns with the greatest courage; while one party were engaged in loading them, the others would rush forward and defend them, and then retire at the moment they were fired, and be at their posts again before the British could reach them.

Their numbers were being gradually thinned; but, in the meantime, they were committing great havoc; and the ground in front of their entrenchment was strewed with the dead and dying marines and seamen, who had, with equal gallantry and true courage, ventured to attack them. The numbers of the British seemed, to Fleetwood, to be awfully decreased; the marines and a few seamen only appearing to keep the pirates in check, when a loud shout proclaimed the cause of it; and he saw Colonel Gauntlett at the head of a large party, dragging forward one of the guns from another part of the fort. They halted, and, opening on either side, the gun was fired directly at the centre of the gang of pirates.

"Now, on, my friends!" shouted the colonel.

"On, on!" cried the lieutenant; and, at the same moment, Fleetwood led on his party towards the devoted desperadoes. Not one cried for quarter; but they could not, for an instant, withstand such an attack; every one was cut down or

driven towards the edge of the cliff, where, still inspired by their desire of revenge, they seized their opponents, and endeavoured to drag them over with themselves. Almost the last survivor was old Vlacco; and exerting all the remaining strength which age had left him, for he was still unwounded, he fixed his death grasp on the arm of one of the foremost of his assailants; slowly he stepped back, as he was forced to retreat, enticing his antagonist on, till, feeling his left foot over the edge, he sprang forward to grasp him.

"In Heaven's name, hold me back!" shouted a voice, which Captain Fleetwood thought he recognised as Bowse's. The old pirate threw himself back with all his might, in the hopes of overbalancing the man whose arm he held, and dragging him with him. For himself he had no hope, no expectation but instant death, and the gratification of his revenge against one of those who had caused the destruction of himself and many of his comrades. Bowse was a powerful man; but he had been weakened by long confinement, and the pirate was large and heavy. Once he drew himself back, lifting the old man with him; but again Vlacco forced him forward, pressed as he was by others behind, who did not see their nearness to the dreadful precipice, and he felt that the despairing pirate was dragging him, with himself, to instant destruction; his feet lost their hold of the ground, and he was falling forward, when he, at length, sung out for help — though scarcely expecting it; but at that instant he felt himself dragged back by a powerful hand, and a sword descending, severed, with a blow, the arm of the old pirate, who, with a cry of rage, disappeared into the dark obscurity of the abyss below; and Bowse, turning round to thank his preserver, found that he was his old shipmate, Tommy Small.

This was the last resistance the British had to encounter; and, unfortunately, it had cost them very dear. The second lieutenant of the Vesta, a mate of the Venus, and six seamen and marines, had been killed, and ten men wounded, as well as four officers. About fifteen pirates only were found dead, but a larger number had been seen to throw themselves over the cliffs; and the wounded had probably destroyed themselves in the same manner, for five only, who were unable to move, were discovered alive. About twenty, who had either wanted resolution to destroy themselves, or thought they were less guilty, and, therefore, likely to escape punishment, were dragged out from the holes among the ruins, where they had concealed themselves — these were the only remnant of the force who had made so stout a resistance; the rest had either escaped in the vessels, or their mangled corpses were to be found at the bottom of the cliffs. Although Captain Fleetwood was most anxious to be off, he considered that it would not do to evacuate the place till it had undergone a strict examination, he determined, therefore, to leave the Vesta's lieutenant of marines, with thirty marines and twenty seamen, in charge, while he led the rest back to embark on board their ships, where he knew, should the gale increase, their services would be required.

Among the wounded was Colonel Gauntlett. His grief on hearing that his niece had been carried off by the pirate was very great.

"It is a sad thing for that poor child; and though I have had much sorrow in my time, never has anything pained me more," he said, as the captain told him what had occurred. "And for you, Fleetwood, I feel most deeply. You loved the girl, and you deserve her for the exertions you have made to recover her. In Heaven's name, get back to your ship and pursue the scoundrel round the world, if he goes so far. For myself, I will remain here, and have my old carcass doctored; and if, as you think there is a possibility of her being concealed somewhere in the island, I will discover her, and shall be here to take charge of her, while you, at all events, will have the satisfaction of punishing the pirate."

Thus it was arranged; indeed, the colonel was unfit to be moved, and was likely to fare much better in the tower, under the care of Mitchell, and a surgeon, who was left to look after the wounded, than on board the brig in a gale of wind.

Marianna, however, entreated that she might not be left behind on the island. She urged that her mistress must have been carried away in the Sea Hawk, and that as the Ione was going in search of that vessel, her services would certainly be required when she was recovered, which she felt positive she would be, as she would serve as a chaperone to Ada, should he be blessed by finding her. Fleetwood was glad to take her with him. The first person he inquired for, after the pirates had been overcome, was his friend Captain Vassilato.

Bowse said that he had been released with him and the Maltese, Pietro, from the dungeon under the tower, by Colonel Gauntlett's party, and that he had seen him charging the last band of pirates who had resisted. It was for some time feared that he was one of those who had gone over the cliffs, either dragged over by the pirates, or in the eagerness of pursuit; but at length he was discovered under a wall, where he had managed to crawl to be out of the way of the scuffle, after receiving a severe wound on the leg from the wind of a round shot.

His delight at seeing Fleetwood, whom he thought had been killed, he declared, restored him to health; and he insisted on being carried on board the Ione, to get sooner on board his own vessel, that he might go in chase of the pirate. Bowse also begged to be allowed to accompany the captain.

All their arrangements being made, Fleetwood set off at the head of his men to return to the little bay, where the boats were left. The march back was less difficult and more rapid than the advance, as they were now able to light their lanterns, which had been brought, and to use some torches which had been discovered in the fort. They reached the boats in safety; but although the bay was to leeward, as the gale was blowing strong, there was a good deal of swell setting into the little cove, and they experienced considerable difficulty in embarking, and no little danger in getting out to sea. The ships, however, showed plenty of lights to guide them on board; but the way the lights moved showed that there was a heavy swell, and the loud roar of the surf warned them that they would have breakers to pass through before they could get on board.

"It must be done, Small," said the captain, as her crew were getting the cutter afloat. "We have gone through many a worse surf, but never through so narrow a passage in so dark a night."

"I've always managed to see the way out of any place I've got into, sir," replied Small. "Please Heaven, sir, we'll get out of this too."

"Very well," said the captain. "Gentlemen, I will lead, and let the boats follow at a sufficient distance from each other not to run the risk of fouling."

Captain Vassilato was lifted into the cutter, she was shoved off through the surf, and the impetus almost sent her up to the entrance. A high black mound appeared to rise before her, obscuring the view even of the lights on board the ships, and seeming to block up all exit. Small's eyes were keen, he exactly hit the passage, and the boat, rising on the surge, her oars almost touching the rocks on either side, darted out into the open sea. For an instant only, Fleetwood went alongside the Ione to put his Greek friend on board, and to order Saltwell to get everything ready for weighing the instant he returned, and he then pulled off to the frigate to make a report of what had occurred, and to advise the instant pursuit of the pirate.

Captain Grantham was very much grieved to hear of the loss of so many men, and that the young lady had been again spirited away, and promised, as soon as it was daylight, to go in chase of her; but in the dark, he considered it worse than useless to move from his comparatively snug berth. He was glad a nest of such determined pirates had been routed out; but, independent of more humane motives, he regretted to have to send up to the Admiralty so long a list of casualties. It showed, however, that it was no trifling affair, and he might truly state, that it was impossible to count the number of the enemy killed.

"You, Fleetwood, do as you think best," said Captain Grantham. "If you wish to get under weigh, do so; but, tell me, what plan do you propose to pursue?"

"I think, while the present gale lasts, of standing across to examine the island to the westward of this; and when it moderates, or if the wind shifts, I shall stand to the northward, towards the Gulf of Salonica, where there are numerous hordes of pirates, with whom Zappa is certain to find friends."

"I am not quite so sure of that — remember, two of a trade can never agree. However, it is as well to try in that direction. I will stand to the southward and westward, and will send Rawson to the eastward, and we will then rendezvous off this island, unless we happen to catch sight of our friend in the meantime, in a week or ten days — Heaven grant that we may have success!"

Chapter Thirty Seven.

When Zappa saw, by the overwhelming number of his enemies who poured into the fort, that he must perish or make good his retreat from the island, he ordered those of the Sea Hawk's crew who were on shore to accompany him; and retreating from the fight, he left them below while he rushed up into Ada's tower, and gained the chamber where the terrified females were assembled.

"Fond girl, I will not leave you to perish or to be branded as the pirate's mistress," he exclaimed, clasping Nina in his arms. "I will not quit you till I can place you in safety — come with me."

"We will live or die together," murmured Nina, forgetting, in that moment of defeat and disaster, all the cruelty of which he had been guilty towards her.

"Lady, your friends have gained the day," he continued, turning to Ada. "You have brought rain on my head, and you have your revenge — farewell."

Miss Garden's heart beat quick with hope. The moment of her emancipation had at last arrived, and he whom she loved had come to her rescue. At the instant the pirate disappeared, a person rushed forward, and seizing her in his arms, exclaimed, — "Haste, signora, from hence, or destruction awaits us."

She knew Paolo Montifalcone's voice; and believing that the pirate had intended to blow up the tower, she fancied that he had come to save her, nor attempted to struggle in his grasp. She shrieked out to Marianna to follow her, but the poor girl was so petrified with horror at the death of little Mila, which had just taken place, that she could not move, and in vain Ada implored the Italian to stop for her attendant. His only reply was — "It will be too late, and we shall be destroyed — on, on."

He seemed to be endowed with strength almost superhuman; he gained the bottom of the steps, and rushing on, was soon among the body of the retreating crew of the Sea Hawk, who were following their captain. They all recognised Paolo, who was a favourite among them, and aided him in supporting his burden.

"Oh where are you taking me to?" exclaimed Ada, when, too late, she heard the sounds of the strange voices round her, and found that she was descending the ravine.

"To happiness and freedom," he answered passionately, and pressed her closer in his arms.

Ada, with horror, saw that she was cruelly betrayed. She shrieked aloud, and struggled to get free; but he who bore her had pictured the only joy he could hope for in possessing her, and intense misery without her, and he could not bring himself to relinquish what he valued more than life itself.

"Hear me, sweet Ada," he exclaimed, as he still bore her on. "He whom you loved is dead, and a heart devoted as mine, is alone worthy to occupy the place he held."

Still Ada entreated him to have mercy on her, to take her back to her friends, who must even now be in the tower she had just quitted; but he was deaf to all her prayers.

The gentle, timid Paolo had been sadly changed by the scenes he had witnessed, and the burning love to which, he had madly resigned his soul. She saw at length that all appeals to his generosity or better feelings were vain, and overcome with horror, she fainted.

When they reached the beach, Zappa and Nina had already embarked; he placed Ada in another boat, with the rear-guard of the pirates. They were quickly alongside, and she was lifted on deck, still insensible, and, without the chief seeing her, Paolo carried her in his arms below. Instantly the brig was under weigh, and darting out of the harbour, was hotly engaged with the Ypsilante.

Once on the open sea, the pirates breathed more freely, and sail after sail, notwithstanding the strength of the breeze, was let fall from the yards. The shot of the fort had already damaged their enemy, and now bringing their broadside to bear on her just before she kept away in chase, they raked her fore-and-aft, killing many of the people, and cutting away much of her rigging.

The Sea Hawk was celebrated for her speed, and the rigging of the Ypsilante was much cut up, but her commanding officer was a gallant fellow, and crippled as he was, determined, if he could, not to lose sight of the enemy; and was soon after her, firing his bow-chasers with little or no effect, as the Sea Hawk was rapidly running from them, firing her stern guns in return.

Meantime the Sea Hawk winged her rapid flight over the foaming waters. She had received but slight damage from the cannonade, opened on her by the Ypsilante, during the storming of the fort, and none after she got outside the harbour, so that the pirates were able to laugh at the efforts of her pursuer.

Zappa having run the Ypsilante out of sight, shaped as northerly a course as the wind would allow him, towards that part of the Archipelago where the islands cluster the thickest, that, among their many intricate and dangerous channels, well known to him and his crew, he might have a greater chance of avoiding his enemies; and would be certain to find friends ready to assist him. The two misticos, not being able to look up so well to the gale, had to run before it till it moderated, and they then hauled up in the same direction. From their rig and appearance being that of the ordinary craft of the Mediterranean, they ran less risk of recognition than the brig, or of detection, from being able to conceal themselves in any nook or bay, or behind any reef which might offer itself, so that an enemy might pass close to them, without their being seen.

The gale continued blowing with undiminished fury till daylight, when it gave signs of abating. It had been the means of saving Zappa and his comrades, and he wished it to continue rather longer to carry him entirely clear of his pursuers. Men with sharp eyes were sent aloft to look out on every side, to discover if any vessels were in sight. They reported one hull down in the northern board, the heads of her topsails only seen, which was, doubtless, the

Ypsilante, and two on the larboard quarter, which seemed like the two misticos. As the sun rose, his beams seemed to calm the rage of the tempest, the wind fell, the clouds dispersed, and the sea went down, and Zappa no longer felt the anxiety he had at first experienced for the fate of his vessel. He now mustered his crew, and found that some of his bravest and best men had fallen when attempting to defend the fort against the first attack of the English; the remainder promised to stand by him as long as the Sea Hawk floated on the waves. Every arrangement which circumstances would admit of being made for the future, he dismissed all but the necessary watch on deck, to take the rest they so much needed.

Among those who appeared was Paolo. He hitherto had had no time to speak to him — he now summoned him to his side.

"What," he exclaimed, "are you not yet weary of a rover's life, that you return again to the Sea Hawk — or did you fear a pirate's fate, if you had remained on shore?"

The Italian looked conscience-stricken and miserable. He could not meet the glance of the pirate's eye; he dared not confess what he had done; and yet he knew it must be instantly discovered.

"Could I leave my sister?" he asked. "Could I leave one whom I love dearer than life itself to perish amid the raging fight, when my arm might save her? Do you suppose that my eye is so dull, my heart so callous, that I could behold the rare beauty which almost won your affections from her who had sacrificed all to you, and yet feel no impression? Know, that he whom you have treated as a tyrant does his slave, whom you have scorned and deceived, has a heart capable of burning with a passion far more intense, far brighter, far purer, and more enduring than the flickering flame which yours can alone nourish."

"What is this rhapsody about?" exclaimed Zappa, thinking that Paolo had gone mad.

"When you go below, you will discover," answered the Italian, and walked to the other side of the deck.

When Ada Garden came to her senses, she found herself in the cabin of the Sea Hawk, and Nina bending over her, and applying such restoratives as she had at command. She was soon sufficiently recovered to explain to her astonished friend the means by which she had come there.

"And Paolo could have done this. He who professed to be ready to die for you, to tear you from the very arms of your friends, when they were on the point of recovering you. Alas! my unhappy brother — his mind must have forsaken him."

"Whatever the cause, I have sorely suffered, and I have no one to trust to now but you, Nina. Through you alone can I now hope to be restored to my friends."

As Ada was speaking, the pirate chief entered the cabin. He started back, on seeing her, and an angry frown came over his brow. "What! and my suspicions are true," he exclaimed, in a voice of passion. "And that mad youth has ventured

to bring you on board. You, lady, who have been the cause of the disaster we have suffered, who have already so nearly proved my destruction."

He ground his teeth as he spoke, and the two defenceless girls saw that he was working himself up to the same awful pitch of fury to which he had given way when he so barbarously wounded Nina.

"But where is this wretched youth?" he continued. "Here, Momolo — Balbo," calling to some of his officers, "seize Signor Paolo, and drag him here. Take care that he does not leap overboard to avoid you. He has performed an act, by which he has well merited death, and he knows his guilt is discovered."

While those he spoke to were absent obeying his orders, he stood at the door of the cabin, grasping his sword, as if he meditated a dire and speedy vengeance. Nina sprung towards him and clasped his arm.

"Oh! you will not injure him — you will not — you cannot kill my brother! He has committed a great fault — but his death will not remedy it. Say, for my sake — say, for her sake — for she wishes not his destruction — you will forgive him?"

While Nina was thus pleading for her brother, he was brought in by four of the crew, who, supposing that he had been found guilty of treachery — the only crime in a pirate's eye — stood over him with their drawn daggers in their hands, to execute, at the moment, the chief's commands. Zappa shook her off without answering her.

"So, signor, you have dared to drag hither the glittering bait which has already allured a host of enemies to attack us; and while I would have left her as their prize, and escaped in safety from what you have done, they will still continue their pursuit, nor desist till they have destroyed us all. From the number of men engaged in the attack, there must, doubtless, be many ships in chase of us, whereas, had you not committed this mad act, we might have gone our way unmolested. Such is your crime and its consequences; and if I deliver you up to the crew, and explain what you have done, they will save me the trouble of being your executioner. Take him on deck," he said, in Romaic, to the men who held Paolo. "I will follow shortly; and you may, meantime, make preparations to deal with a traitor."

The pirates were dragging the miserable man away, when Ada, who though she knew not the words which were used, comprehended their meaning, sprang from her seat and grasped Paolo's arm, to prevent his being carried off.

"Stay," she cried, appealing to Zappa. "Do not condemn this unhappy man to death. Towards me he has acted the most cruel part — but I forgive him. For your own sake, I implore you to do so likewise, for the sake of that sweet girl. Oh! do not commit so black a crime. It will be a murder, for he had no intention of injuring you or your followers. Blinded by an unhappy passion for me, he has done this, fancying that the man to whom I was to be united is no more; and has been led on in the vain hope of one day possessing me, and winning the worthless love I should have to give. Let me now swear that nothing shall ever induce me to become his — and let it be part of his punishment that he knows

what he has done is in vain; and if, by any means, I can remedy the evil he has committed, I will do so, if you will allow him to live."

"A lady who pleads so energetically should have her prayers granted," said the pirate, with a tone of irony. "But let him beware how he behaves — unhand him," he said to the men, in their own tongue. "These ladies have pleaded for the prisoner, and are answerable for his conduct. And tow, signora," he said, in a blander tone, addressing himself to Ada, "by what means do you propose to remedy the fault of that madman?"

Ada was silent for some minutes, during which the pirate stood regarding her attentively.

"It is fitter for you to point out the means by which I can serve you, than for me to propose them," she at length replied. "Indeed, I can do nothing till I am restored to my friends; I am sure that any ransom you may propose, which they have the power to pay, they will gladly give for my liberty."

"It is a pity that was not thought of before; but, are you aware, lady, that it is usual to secure the ransom before the prisoner is restored?" observed Zappa.

"Touch then at one of the Ionian Islands, where there are English authorities, and let me write letters in different directions, and before long, I doubt not, the money will be raised, and will be deposited wherever you desire. If you will allow me to go on shore, I will promise to do my very utmost to place the money in your hands, and will send word to the British cruiser, now in search of this ship, that I am in safety; and will at the same time exert all the influence I may possess with my friends to obtain your pardon, should you be captured. This I promise to do most faithfully."

"Oh, listen to her!" exclaimed Nina, springing towards the pirate, and seizing his hands. "Land her in safety and honour among her own people, and she will pay you the money if you demand it, and I — I will be responsible that she does so with my life — but why demand it? you have already more wealth than you require on board this vessel, and no rest nor safety can you expect, or hope to find, while you follow your present pursuits; your hand against every man, and the hand of every man against you," — (Nina knew not that she was quoting the words of the sacred book to describe her husband) — "but oh, my husband, remember that there is a land across the narrow Adriatic, where your deeds are unknown, and where we may henceforth live unsuspected in tranquillity, and with such happiness as we can enjoy — that land, the land of my birth — there, in the home which I deserted for your sake, you will be secure; there I will watch over you, will tend you, will strive to make you forget the past in the contentment of the present; and should you be discovered, should any one attempt to tear you from me, I will give my life with joy for yours. Oh say that you will do this — say you will abandon the evil course you are leading, and you will make my heart beat lighter than it has done for many a day, and bless the words you utter."

The pirate was somewhat softened.

"Nina," he said, looking at her with a glance of more affection than she had

for a long time seen, “you know not what you ask me to do. You know not the difficulty, the almost impossibility of accomplishing what you wish. Even were I seized with the humour to turn virtuous, I cannot abandon my vessel and my crew; they are bound to me and I to them; and were I to quit them, they would be captured, to a certainty, and in just revenge for my desertion, they would inform all they met of my retreat. If I proposed to leave them they would not let me, and from that instant I should lose all my authority. And then think, should I even succeed in commencing the existence you propose, how is it likely to suit one, accustomed from his earliest days to the dissipation of cities, or the wild excitement of a rover’s life — how should I, who have so long commanded a band of men, regardless of all laws but those I have framed, and yet obedient to me as children, submit to the dull, plodding business of a country farmer engaged in superintending bumpkins in their daily toil? No, Nina, you must not expect it; I feel it cannot be.”

He was silent, and seemed lost in thought. His lips moved, but his words were almost inaudible.

“The vision was too bright and beautiful ever to be realised,” he murmured. “Alas, alas, I have for ever cut myself off from such happiness — and that fond girl too — oh, it is a cruel fate for her to be linked for ever to one so lost. Yet it might be done. I might again seek out the speronara of the Sicilian Alessandro, and he should land us on some part of the coast I would select, nor should he know whither we went. Ah — but is he to be trusted? Would he not, if he saw our wealth, be tempted to destroy us for the sake of possessing himself of it? — would he not, even if we concealed it ever so carefully, or even had it not, suspect that we had it, and equally attempt our destruction? Who is to be trusted? In whom can I, especially, of all men, dare to confide? Alas! on no one. Every one of my fellow men, except the ruffians who surround me, and a few like them, would glory in betraying me. I might, it is true, find some stranger bound for the Italian coast, and with a well-invented tale about the vessel I had quitted, persuade them to carry me whither I may determine to go.”

“Nina, I will think about it,” he said, aloud. “I would please you if I could; but though my power to do evil has been great, alas! the means I possess of doing good are small indeed.”

“Oh, do more than think of it,” exclaimed Nina, looking up imploringly in his face. “Resolve with your determined will to execute what you think of — resolve to overcome all difficulties — to be daunted by no dangers, and she and I will bless you to our dying day, and our prayers will ascend to heaven to implore forgiveness for the crimes which now weigh down your soul and prevent you from perceiving clearly where true peace and happiness can alone be found.”

“Enough, Nina, enough, or you will make me act the woman,” exclaimed Zappa, releasing his hands from her grasp, and rushing on deck, where his voice was heard, immediately after, issuing some orders in his usual firm and loud tones.

“You will conquer, my sweet Nina; you will persuade him to abandon a pirate’s life, and happiness may yet be in store for you,” said Ada, kissing the cheek of her friend, who sat pale and trembling on the couch by her side.

Nina shook her head sorrowfully.

“Alas!” she replied, “you know not the wayward spirit which possesses him, or you would not speak to me of hope.”

Chapter Thirty Eight.

Several days had passed, and the Sea Hawk was still among the clustering islands of the Archipelago. Twice she had attempted to escape from them on her voyage to Cephalonia; but each time she had been driven back by the appearance of suspicious sails to the westward, which her captain believed to be British men-of-war, cruising in search of him.

Men were stationed all day and night on the yard-arms, and topmast-heads to look out for the first faint outline of a ship; yet, not as before, in the hopes of falling in with a richly-laden merchantman, but for the purpose of avoiding her, lest she should prove to be one of the many enemies on the watch to destroy them. The wind also no longer favoured them, but shifting to the westward, had aided to baffle them in their efforts to escape. Zapa prayed again for the gale, which had so opportunely arisen to enable him to force his way out of the harbour of Lissa; but now when he equally needed it, and had no evil purpose in view, when better intentions had been formed and better feelings had arisen, it refused to blow. Either contrary winds or calms had always been met with, and till he had a prospect of a quick run, it would be folly to venture out from amid the islets, which now sheltered him. He was afraid of anchoring, or of remaining off any place for an hour together, lest an enemy should suddenly appear and give him no time to make sail to escape. He seldom went below, but wrapped in his cloak he threw himself on the deck, when weary nature required rest, to be ready at a moment's call. His days and nights were full of toil, care, and watchfulness, and thus the time wore on. It was a lovely day; the sky was of the most intense blue, without a cloud or speck to dim its brilliancy; the sea calm as a mirror, and reflecting the hue of the bright canopy above, was of so crystal a clearness that the eye seemed capable of piercing to its very lowest depths; the sun shone forth with glowing splendour, and the wind of the gentle zephyr, which came from the west, blew with a balmy softness, incapable of ruffling the water, or of forcing through it the pirate brig. Her sails, spread to catch the first breath of a stronger breeze, now hung almost idle from the yards, or ever and anon gave a loud flap of impatience against the masts.

Blue islands rose out of the water on every side of the ship; some extending a considerable distance along the horizon, others, mere hillocks, appearing above it; and besides the more distant islands, several islets were seen, mostly barren rocks, some of a mile in length, and others of a few hundred yards; the largest only being of a height sufficient to conceal a vessel behind them. Some were broken into picturesque forms, and their sides sprinkled with moss and lichens, or coarse grass, and a few low shrubs looked green and inviting at a little distance — a deception which a nearer approach quickly dissipated. Here and there also black lines and spots might be seen on the surface, being the summit of coral reefs, which, with any sea, were entirely concealed by the wild

foaming surf breaking over them; and though the greater number of these were almost flush with the water, or below it, a few rose as much as five or ten feet above it. As may be supposed, no vessel would venture into this locality, unless those on board were well acquainted with its numerous hidden dangers.

To increase them still further, strong currents set among the islands, running towards various quarters, accordingly as they encountered the opposition of the rocks, either above or below the surface, so that it was impossible, from the appearance of the land, to say in which direction the vessel, exposed to their influence, would next be carried. Into one of these currents, the Sea Hawk had now got, and though she appeared to be stationary in the water, she was being driven on at a rapid rate past the land to the westward. Her captain, however, apprehended no danger — he had every rock and shoal mapped out in his mind far more correctly than on any chart in existence, and he felt confident of being able to avoid them; and thus, though the airs came from the westward, the brig was carried bodily to windward, and steerage way was just kept on her.

The heat of the cabin was so great, that Ada and Nina had been forced on deck, over the after part of which an awning had been spread to shelter them from the sun — and there they sat, silent and sad, for the long delay which had occurred had depressed their spirits, and filled their imaginations with forebodings of coming evil.

Paolo stood by himself, leaning over the quarter-rail, and gazing, with a vacant listlessness, at the sea; no one speaking to him, and he noticing no one.

Zappa slowly paced the deck, every now and then stopping to watch the progress of the vessel, and to issue his orders to the helmsman or sail trimmers, who were at their stations ready for any emergency; but though every sail, to her royals, were set, with that light wind, a few hands only were required to box about the yards, as it became necessary to keep the vessel away, or haul her more up, to avoid the rocks and shoals as they presented themselves.

Looking at that beautiful fabric, as she floated proudly on the waters, and observing the skill with which she was handled, it was difficult to suppose that danger of any kind, beyond what I have mentioned, could menace her.

Zappa himself felt secure, for he knew that none of his enemies could here approach him unawares; or, if they daringly ventured into that labyrinth of dangers, he could easily elude them, or entice them to their destruction. However, a strict look out for the appearance of any sail was, as usual, kept; but all his attention was occupied in conning the vessel through the intricate passage he had selected, in order thus to make some progress on his voyage.

“If this dreadful state of uncertainty endure much longer, I feel that it will kill me,” said Nina, taking Ada’s hand, and looking into her face, as if to read the effect her words produced. Her dim, sunken eye, and the hectic spot on her faded cheek, gave sad token that her words were too likely to be fulfilled. “For your sake, dear friend, I will try to live, and for his sake also. I would not quit him, even for another and a better world, till I was assured that he had forsaken

the sinful and dangerous path he has, alas, so long followed. It is an awful thing to think that he whom one loves, better far than one's-self, may be speedily hurried to his eternal doom, without a prayer for forgiveness — a hope in the future. I would not be separated from him, and yet I dare not wish to bear him company; though I feel that, black as are his crimes, my guilt is even greater. I deserted a fond father — I broke his heart, Ada, and can such a one as I hope for Heaven? Will the suffering, the agony of heart, I have endured, be any atonement in the sight of God? Oh, promise me, Ada, that should death claim me as his own, you will strive, by every means in your power, to lead him back to virtue — to preserve him from the ignominy, the punishment which, even I acknowledge, he has deserved at the hands of his fellow-men."

Ada Garden roused herself from her own despondency, to soothe the feelings of her friend. She endeavoured to persuade her that her prognostications regarding her own death were probably groundless; and though she did not seek to lessen her horror of the crime she had committed, she pointed out to her the merciful promises held forth in the sacred writings, that her repentance was of more value than her sufferings; that the latter was sent by a kind Heaven to produce the former feeling, and that, trusting in Him who died for all, she might hope confidently for pardon, and remission of her sins. She assured her of her own belief, that Heaven is not deaf to those who pray that those they love may be made to repent; and she entreated her, if on that account alone, to live for her husband's sake.

"And, Nina," she continued, "what a weak girl — what one situated as I am can do, I will do for your husband; and more, I will entreat Captain Fleetwood, not only to save him from punishment, but to use every means in order to persuade him to repent of the past, and to follow a noble and virtuous course of life."

In this manner the two lovely girls had conversed for some time in tones not above a whisper, lest it should be heard by him whom it most concerned, when an exclamation of terror escaped the lips of Nina, and, seizing Ada's arm with a convulsive grasp, she pointed over the larboard side of the vessel, where a sight met their view, which was, indeed, sufficient to make the stoutest heart quail.

Meantime the captain stood near the weather gangway, directing, as I said, the course of the vessel, with his first mate by his side, whom he had called to him to point out the danger yet to be passed; while, as a precautionary, and, indeed, usual measure on such occasions, hands were stationed at the jib-boom end, and at the weather foreyard-arm, to give timely notice of any rocks which might lie in their course beneath the water, from the beautiful clearness of which they were discernable, even though many feet from the surface, at a considerable distance. The brig's head was to the southward, and all eyes were thus turned to windward, or in the direction towards which she was drifting with the current, and no one thought of looking on the lee side, from which no possible danger was apprehended.

"We have done well to come here, Baldo," observed Zappa to his mate. "We

are here far more secure than in any harbour in the world; for no one but a mariner of our own islands would venture his ship among these reefs. See yonder black ledge, which shows its threatening summit a few feet only above the water — there is a passage between it and another reef further to the southward, through which we shall easily pass, provided the wind does not fail us altogether; and if so, we must rouse the hands up and take to our sweeps."

"It is a dangerous place, though, captain, and one I would rather not venture into, unless I was very sure of my weather," replied the mate. "Even now, if it was to come on to blow, it would be no easy matter to get clear."

"No fear of that, my friend; I who brought the craft into this place will take her safely out again, let the wind blow with its greatest fury. A gale is what we have day and night been praying for; and let one come, the gallant Sea Hawk will brave it, and laugh at her enemies. But tell me, Baldo, how do the people like this hide-and-seek life? It is not what they have been accustomed to under my command."

"They wonder what your intentions are," answered the mate. "They say that, by sailing westward, as you propose, we are more likely to meet with our enemies, than if we kept among the islands to the northward, where we have friends."

"The very reason I would avoid the locality," said Zappa. "We shall certainly be sought for there; whereas, no one will expect to find us in the broad seas to the west; and remind them besides, that where we are going, we shall, without doubt, fall in with some richly-laden merchantmen, which will amply repay all hands for their losses."

"There is reason in that, captain; I dare say it will content the men," said the mate. "But while I am on the subject, there is another complaint which they have to make."

"What is it?" asked the pirate, angrily, for he did not like his mate's tone. "I love not to hear complaints."

"The stranger lady," replied the mate.

"Well, what of her?" inquired the captain.

"She has brought us all into this scrape," continued Baldo.

"So it is said, is it?" remarked the captain, with a dark frown.

"No one knows why she was brought on board," continued the mate, speaking fast, to say what he wished, before any further interruption occurred. "Some say that Signor Paolo brought her here; but it is supposed that he did so according to your orders."

"They do, do they?" said Zappa, compressing his lips. "And now, tell we what would they have done?"

"They would have you get rid of her," answered the mate, boldly.

"It is what I am about to do," returned the captain. "I purpose landing her at Cephalonia."

"What, without a ransom!" exclaimed Baldo.

"With or without a ransom, as the case may be," said Zappa, coldly.

"If without a ransom, there would be a more speedy way of getting rid of her, and would better satisfy them," observed the mate, with a dogged look, in which a certain amount of fear was mingled, with audacity. "We want no women on board — all has gone ill when we have had them," he muttered, in a lower tone, which the captain, however, did not fail to hear.

"Speak out — what mean you?" he asked fiercely.

"That the deep sea will be the safest place for her, where she will not trouble us more," exclaimed the mate, half trembling as he uttered the words, for there was something in Zappa's look which warned him he had better not say them.

Somewhat to his surprise, however, his captain suppressed whatever feelings inspired him.

"And such is the wish of the crew, that I should destroy an innocent girl, who has trusted to me, and, perhaps, they would desire me to cast my wife also into the sea, to gratify their anger, because we have met with a reverse to which all are subject. Well, tell them I will think about the matter."

"They insist on having your instant decision, captain. Some of them have friends in an island not far off, and they declare that they will land, and leave you and the craft to take care of each other, if you refuse to grant their request. Some even venture to whisper words about deposing you, and sending you to look after your mistresses."

"And you, the loudest whisperer of them all," exclaimed the pirate, in a fierce tone, so loud, that, had not those to whom it related been absorbed in their own conversations, they must have been startled by it. "That I slay you not this instant, you have to thank the critical position in which the ship is placed. Go, tell them that I, Zappa, their chief, intend to remain their captain as long as the Sea Hawk floats proudly on the ocean, or till I absolve them from their allegiance. Go, tell them this, and think well before you again venture to be the bearer of such a message from the crew. First, get a pull on the braces; we must luff all we can, to get through yonder passage."

Baldo, without venturing to answer, hurried to execute the order; and, as soon as the yards were braced sharp up, after giving a glance at his chief, who he had so lately been accustomed, to fear, that he felt surprised at his own audacity, he went below to consult with his coadjutors what was to be done. He cunningly had taken advantage of his chief's late want of success, to ingratiate himself with the people, and had employed all the ordinary arts of a demagogue to weaken the authority of the man he wished to supplant; and he now gave the answer to their message, with such exaggerations and alterations as he judged would best suit his purpose, and inflame the minds of his hearers to the proper pitch for executing his mutinous designs. He had, somewhat to the surprise of Zappa, who, however, soon fathomed his reasons, pretended to be ignorant of the navigation of the passage, through which they were winding their way, that he might thus throw him more completely off his guard. The largest portion of the crew had been won over, and they were now summoned below to hear the decision of the rest, and to put their plan into immediate execution. This may

be guessed at; it involved the instant destruction of their chief, as well as of the unprotected girl, whom he refused to sacrifice to their fears.

Baldo had marked the ill-starred Nina as his own; and Paolo, who had always been a favourite, and had never made an enemy, they intended to preserve as useful to them in his former capacity of surgeon. Thus it is, that the lawless can never depend for an instant on each other.

Zappa still stood at his post, issuing the necessary orders; and, although gloomy forebodings were on his mind, he resolutely determined to dare the worst, rather than yield. He marked the mutineers gradually gliding off below, each man eyeing him as he went, still fearful of being perceived, till, at last, the stations of many of them were deserted; and he saw that, should any duty suddenly be required of them, there were not hands to perform it.

"This must not be," he muttered. "They have already carried things too far. I must recover my authority now, or I lose it, and am destroyed."

He gave a look to windward to see that the vessel was in no danger for some minutes to come, and was advancing to the main hatchway, with his sword in his hand, intending to spring down boldly among the mutineers, and bring the matter to a crisis, by daring them to attack him, when his eye glanced, for an instant, to leeward. That instant was sufficient to create far greater alarm in his mind than had his mutinous crew.

"All hands on deck. Up men, for your lives, up! Clew up, haul down! Brace round the after-yards! Up with the helm!"

To the eastward, hitherto unobserved, a small, white cloud had appeared, no bigger than a man's hand. With almost the velocity of a thunderbolt it darted across the sky, expanding as rapidly, till, as it approached, it seemed like a vast bank of white mist, to which the rays of the sun, now past the meridian, gave a bright and shining appearance, the sea below, as if swept up by its base, curling in huge, foaming waves, and overtopping, with an angry roar, the reefs it encountered, as it bubbled and hissed in its onward course, while it sent before it, flying high into the air, a sheet of spray, which, almost as soon as seen, enveloped the doomed vessel. It was the Sea Hawk's pall. The intending mutineers, startled by the fierce ringing tones of their commander's voice, attempted, in a mass, to rush up the main hatchway; at first, with the purpose of executing their foul project; but, in an instant, as the roar of the tempest struck their ears, and they felt the motion of the vessel, with wild energy, in the hopes of preserving their worthless lives, one man impeded the other; the bond of union was no longer thought of — the fear of their own death, not the wish to destroy another, now urged them on. Those who had first seized the coaming strove to spring on deck, while those below grasped them fast; and few only succeeded in freeing themselves in the struggle, which seemed for existence.

The moment that their services might have availed was lost, if any power could have saved the vessel; those more faithful to their trust, who had remained on deck, flew to the halyards and braces; but, before they could let go the first, or haul away on the others, the white squall was upon them. The sails

were taken flat aback, and the yards pressed against the mast would not start. Down, down she went over on her starboard side, like a tall reed bent by the wind. Her bowsprit and the canvas stretched on it flew to leeward. Her head turned a few points to the eastward — she made a stern-board — the water rushed in torrents up her decks and into her hold — the foam flew wildly over her side, and shrieks, and cries, and oaths, extorted by the agony of despair, escaped from her maddened crew, as they beheld their inevitable doom.

As Zappa saw the fury of the squall, he felt that all his skill and all his courage would avail him as nought to save the Sea Hawk. In this, his last dire extremity, no craven fear filled his heart, and though for his own life he cared not, he remembered that there were others whose lives depended on him. To fly towards the stern before the vessel's deck had become completely perpendicular, was the work of one moment, while in the next he dragged Ada and Nina, who, almost unconsciously, were holding on, by what were now the weather bulwarks, to the outside of the vessel. In this task he was aided by Paolo, when the loud cries of "The ship is sinking, the ship is sinking," uttered by the seamen, and the roar of the tempest had aroused from his apathy, and who had sprung to the side of the two beings most dear to him on earth, with the thought rather of dying with them than of having even the power of being of any assistance to them. The dreadful position in which they were placed was sufficient to paralyse the heart of the bravest, and the terror of the two girls was further increased by the shrieks of the drowning wretches which reached their ears. They now clung with convulsive energy to the quarter-rail, their feet partly supported by the sill of the after-port, and though expecting instant death, they still, with the impulse which the weakest as well as the strongest feel, endeavoured to preserve their lives. Nina was almost unconscious, but Ada Garden still retained her faculties unimpaired, and though she thus more acutely perceived the dangers which surrounded her, she was better able to exert herself for her preservation; yet, in that wild vortex of water, and with a sinking ship alone to rest on, what hope was there? Poor girl — in that moment how many thoughts passed rapidly through her mind. Death to her could have few terrors, but life had many joys, pure and bright, and even these, presented to her mind in all their glowing colours, yet she tried to banish earthly things, to contemplate the life eternal, towards which she was hastening, to offer up a prayer to Heaven for herself, and for those who were being hurried to their doom with her — she prayed as earnestly for herself as for them, for it did not occur to her that she had less need of prayer than they, and who will venture to pronounce that she had? — her advantages had been many, theirs few. Yet, do all she could, that image of one so truly loved would present itself to her eyes, and it added many an additional pang to her heart, to feel the bitter grief her loss would inflict on him. Months, years would pass away, her fate unknown, he still would be vainly searching for her throughout those seas, till, perchance, some spars, or part of the hull, might be washed on some distant shore, and recognised, and a rumour might reach his ears of the destruction of the pirate's

bark, and the suspicions of her doom might at length be confirmed. This thought was, perhaps, the most cruel she had to bear. These and many more passed through her mind more rapidly than I have taken to write them.

"She sinks, she sinks!" was the only intelligible cry which reached her ears.

"She does not sink," was heard in answer, in Zappa's deep-toned voice. "She floats still — come aft here, and aid me in lowering this quarter-boat into the water."

The men he spoke to who were in the fore-rigging, could scarcely hear his words, but they comprehended his signs and intentions. Eight of them came aft to assist him in lowering the boat, a light gig lashed to the main rigging. Paolo remained with his sister and her friend, to aid them in holding on in their perilous position, in which they were further assisted by some ropes which Zappa had fastened to the rail, and placed in their hands. The operation required great caution, as the only chance of her swimming was to launch her on the lee-side, or, as it were, in board. The attempt was made. All looked on with anxiety, for they saw that on its success their lives depended — the boat gone, they had no other hope of being preserved. The lashings were cut adrift, the boat was lifted up to stand on her keel, on the rigging, and her stern was slewed round for launching, when a wave, larger than any which had yet struck the vessel, came roaring towards them.

"Hold on for your lives, hold on," cried Zappa.

Some heard him, others, paralysed with fear, let go their hold of the rigging, and the boat, torn from their grasp, was carried over the side, and being stove to pieces, was washed far away from them, while several unfortunate wretches found at the same time a watery grave.

"Lost — all lost!" was the general cry, and this time the captain did not contradict them. The coolest and the bravest abandoned all hope. The foaming waves dashed wildly over the vessel, the wind roared, the thick mist enveloped them with its funereal pall; down, down she went, when a loud crash was heard, the stout timbers and planks were rent and torn asunder; he lifted on the summit of a wave, the bow was seen to twist and writhe, and separating from the after part, to sink in the foaming whirlpool, while the stern was cast with terrific violence on the rocks — another wave lifted it yet higher, and there it remained securely and immovably fixed, though with difficulty the few survivors could maintain their hold. Still their prospect of salvation was small indeed. Another wave might come and wash them off, or dash their last place of refuge into a thousand fragments.

Every instant they expected the coming of the fatal wave; but sea after sea whirled foaming by them, making their eyes giddy, and sickening their hearts with apprehension; yet instead of increasing, each seemed diminished in size.

The last effort of the white squall had been made — its fury was appeased with the sacrifice offered to it. Onward it passed, clothed in its mantle of glittering mist, to other realms: the blue sky appeared, the troubled sea subsided into calmness; and the trembling beings who clung to the shattered

wreck beheld, close to them, a reef of black rocks rising some four or five feet above the surface of the water.

"Courage, my Nina — courage, lady!" exclaimed Zappa. They were the first words he had uttered for some time. "A seaman, with abundance of planks and a few feet of firm rock on which to plant his foot, should never despair. Stay where you are for a few minutes, while I try to find a more secure resting-place for you."

As he said this, he stood up on the side of the vessel, to examine their position. They had struck on the very centre of the reef, forming one side of the channel, through which the Sea Hawk had been endeavouring to pass, and at the only part which was any height above the water; perhaps, indeed, not another spot could have been found which could have so securely wedged in the stern, as to have prevented its following the rest of the vessel to the bottom.

The nearest land where assistance might be obtained was some ten miles off to the southward and westward, and in that direction the current I have spoken of was setting. To the north were interminable reefs and shoals, from which direction no vessel could approach them; nor was it probable, indeed, that a craft of any description would pass near them, as few even of the Greek vessels ever came that way, and the utmost they could hope for was to be seen by some fishing-boat belonging to the neighbouring island.

This occurred to the pirate as he stood up to look around him. Steadying himself, he walked to the end of the taffrail, which he found hung directly over a lodge of rock communicating with the main reef. Securing the end of a rope to the quarter-rail, he lowered himself down to the rock, and found that there was tolerably firm footing on it, and that it would be easy to carry to it a rope-ladder, from where Ada and Nina were clinging, by which they might descend with tolerable security, and from thence gain the main rock, which embraced an area of some hundred square yards or so. Having made this discovery, he again climbed up to the wreck — of the whole crew of the Sea Hawk, but six, besides himself and Paolo, now remained alive. The others had either been drowned in the hold of the vessel as she first capsized, or had subsequently been washed off, or carried away with the bow when it parted.

The corpses of some of the latter were still seen floating about in the eddy round the rocks, and a few more wretched survivors were perceived clinging to portions of the wreck, and carried by the current far away from their companions, who had no power of rendering them any assistance. Ada Garden shuddered as she witnessed their dreadful fate; and yet she felt that her own and that of those with her might not be preferable, but at the same time she and they had been as yet almost miraculously preserved, contrary to all expectation; and she could not help still indulging in the belief that, by some means or other, their deliverance might be achieved.

On Zappa's return to the wreck, he roused up his men, who still clung to it, stupified with terror, and ordered them to exert themselves for their own preservation, as well as for the rest of the survivors.

They had been so long accustomed to obey his voice, that they quickly returned to their senses. The mainmast had gone, as had the main chains, but part of the main rigging, the backstays and shrouds still hung on to the wreck, and these he ordered them to haul up, and by securing the shrouds to the stern, and carrying the other end to the rocks, he formed an easy means of communication, by which Ada and Nina could gain the main rock. They accomplished the passage without fear; and as they found their feet resting once more on firm ground, although it was a barren rock, they followed the natural impulse of their hearts, and bent down on their knees to return thanks to the Great Being who had preserved them.

The hardened pirates, unused as they were to prayer, felt the genial influence, and at the spot where each happened at the moment to be, they stopped in the work in which they were engaged, and knelt likewise in an endeavour to imitate them in act, if not in feeling.

"To work, my friends," exclaimed Zappa. "We have no prospect of release from hence, unless we can construct a raft by which we may escape, while the calm which has now returned continues. I tell you, one hour's moderate gale would render the spot on which we stand untenable, and we must all perish; but do not despair, we may, if we employ our time to advantage, form out of the wreck a raft, which will, with perfect security, convey us to yonder island, where we may find shelter and protection among friends who will gladly receive us."

The men, on hearing their chief's address, expressed their willingness to obey him. His first care was to collect such articles as were floating about in the water near them, and others which had been thrown on different parts of the rock. Among them were chests, and casks, and spars, some of the running rigging, and two or three of the lighter sails, which had floated attached to the spars. The most welcome and the most important prize was a cask of water — the second was a cask of biscuit which had been taken out of an English vessel, and there were two or three of olives; some boxes of figs, rather the worse for their immersion in salt water, but still very acceptable, and two trunks of wearing apparel, which had come on board with the biscuits — altogether, on surveying the provisions, there appeared sufficient to last them with care for several days. Tools, with which to cut up the wreck to form the raft, were the next great desideratum, and the carpenter's chest could not be found. They hunted in all directions without success, till at last, in despair, they began to tear up the bulwarks with their hands, as making a commencement of collecting materials. On doing so, great was their satisfaction on finding three boarding axes secured with beckets to the side. They had now tools to enable them to progress faster with the work. They ripped off all the planking from the bulwarks, and cut up as much of the deck as was above water, and by this means got into one of the larboard cabins just before the bulkhead of the state cabin. It had been occupied by the chief mate, and in it were found another axe, some nails, and several carpenters' tools, as well as a coil of small line, which was very useful for lashing the various parts of the raft together. As the materials

were collected they were carried to the rock, and in a short time the captain considered that they had sufficient to commence operations, as with the few people it would have to carry, a small raft only was necessary. They first lashed some of the spars they had saved, together, forming an oblong square, while others where placed diagonally to strengthen the framework, and the stoutest was secured beneath to form a keel. As their strength would afterwards have been unequal to the task, they were obliged to launch it before they commenced planking it over, and they then secured it on the west side of the reef, as it was in that direction they proposed going, and the water was there much smoother than on the other, where it was still agitated by the effects of the squall.

The spar used for the keel was the upper part of the mainmast, or rather the topmast — for, it must be remembered, she was a polacca-rigged craft — and which had been broken completely off when the lower shrouds went over it; and as this was considerably longer than the raft, planks were fastened to each corner of the square to both the ends, so as to form a pointed bow and stern.

Several casks were picked up which had lost their contents, and these were now bunged up afresh, and secured on either side of the framework, and this being done, the business of planking over the whole now commenced. Nails were little used or required, and it was found more secure and expeditious to lash the ends of each plank down to the framework, securing it also in the middle; and on the top of these, others were placed at right angles, and either lashed or nailed down to them, till the whole was exhausted, thus forming a solid and somewhat strong mass of planking, sufficient, it was to be hoped, to bear them to the island they wished to reach.

On the top of this the chests were placed on either side to serve as bulwarks, one being secured in the centre on a platform of planks, for Ada and Nina to sit on, and round it were arranged the casks of water and provisions which had been hauled out of the water. Some of the smaller spars had been reserved for other purposes. Out of one was formed a mast, out of another a yard, on which the main top-gallant-sail, somewhat reduced, was spread to form a sail. From three oars, a rudder and two oars were manufactured, and a fourth was kept to pole off from any rocks towards which they might be driven. Altogether, a very complete raft was constructed, much superior to many which have borne wave-tossed mariners for days or weeks together on the broad waters of the Atlantic. Not till every arrangement was made did Zappa and his followers desist from their labour.

Meantime Ada and Nina had not been neglected, and the pirate seemed to be endeavouring to make such amends as were in his power for his past conduct. On the further end of the rock a tent was erected with some of the sails, which had been saved, and a case of female wearing apparel was placed within it to enable them to clothe themselves, while their own dresses were drying in the sun, which, when spread out on the hot rock, a very few minutes sufficed to do. Paolo had also collected small pieces of wood, which dried quickly, and he then piled them together to be in readiness to light a fire should

it be required.

The formation of the raft afforded them ample matter of interest, and as they sat there, secure and without discomfort, on that solitary rock, with the ocean smiling calmly around them, the awful event, which so short a time before had cast them there, seemed almost like a dream, which is, with difficulty, recalled to the recollection.

Such food as could be prepared, they were supplied with; but, as may be supposed, they were little inclined to partake of it, nor would they, perhaps, have done so, had they not felt the importance of sustaining their strength to enable them to undergo the dangers and exposure to which they saw they would most probably be subjected.

Thus the day passed rapidly away, and the sun was already verging towards the horizon, by the time the raft was completed. It was now too late, Zappa asserted, to embark, and by waiting for the early dawn, they might have the whole of a day to perform the voyage without the risk of being exposed at night on the raft, and might hope, with certainty, to reach the island before sunset.

The men willingly agreed to their chief's proposal, while the remainder of the party had no choice, but to submit had they objected to it; but it seemed so reasonable, that, anxious as they were to reach a more secure position, they uttered no complaint at his decision.

The tent was, therefore, secured and strengthened, and a flooring formed inside it, on which were placed the portions of sail which had been collected and dried, and the clothing from the chests, so as to make a couch, which, although very rude, afforded a resting-place, for which the two poor girls were most grateful.

Paolo stationed himself outside the tent, at a short distance only from them, and Zappa arranged a resting-place among the casks of water, and the provisions, and chests, which he had taken care should not be embarked. The men, after a supply of food had been served out to them, huddled together, wrapped up in their capotes, on the bare rock, near where they had been working, and held a whispered conversation together, which lasted for some time after darkness covered the face of the deep. Paolo's mind, troubled and unhinged with the thoughts of the past, and the darkening prospect of the future, for long refused to allow sleep to visit his eyelids. He listened to ascertain whether his sister and Miss Garden were still awake; but from the perfect silence in their tent, he trusted that they had been more blessed. He then stood up to look round the rock. The irate chief was sitting on a chest, with his arms folded across is breast, and apparently, from his upright position, still full of care, and on the watch on all around. The people had thrown themselves down where they had been sitting, and seemed to be fast asleep. The sea was calm, as it had been in the morning before the squall; and, though no moon was up, the myriads of stars, which glittered in the sky, threw a light over it even to a far distance, and enabled him to discern many of the reefs and rocky islets which surrounded them, while close at hand was seen, like a

skeleton of some huge monster of the deep, the last remnant of the once gallant Sea Hawk.

Wearied with standing, Paolo again sunk down on the rock. He was awoke by a voice which he knew to be that of Zappa.

"Bouse up, Paolo!" he said. "You have taken your share of sleep, and I would fain snatch some moments of rest to prepare me for the toils of to-morrow; and yet I dare not sleep without leaving some one in whom I can confide on the watch."

"Why, what mean you?" asked Paolo, starting up. "I will gladly watch — but what have you to fear? Surely, no enemies are near us."

"Ah! you know not what was nearly occurring this morning, or you would not ask the question," said Zappa, in a tone of bitterness. "See you yonder six men. Are they, think you, friends or enemies? I tell you I do not trust them. Not long ago, I would have trusted them, as I would have trusted their comrades who have gone to their account; and yet they were about to destroy those two defenceless girls and you, and me, their chief. Ah! you start! You doubtless think the shipwreck we have suffered is a misfortune; and yet, I tell you, Paolo, that I believe by it our lives have been preserved. I can trust to you, Paolo; and while I sleep you must watch. To add to our security, light a small fire with the wood you collected, and keep yourself awake by feeding it. Should any of them move, they will clearly be seen; and perceiving that you are awake, it will make them hesitate what to do. They know also that I have arms — and that my pistols are never unloaded — and that you can call me in a moment, to use them. Two hours' sleep will be sufficient for me — you can, I hope, watch for that time."

Paolo assured Zappa that he would keep a faithful watch, for all their sakes; and then, aided by him, he lighted a fire between themselves and the men, while he kept a store of wood on their side to feed it as it began to decay. The pirate, wrapping himself in a cloak, immediately threw himself down among the stores, and was instantly fast asleep. As Paolo stood by the fire he thought that he beheld the tall masts and white sails of a ship gliding by, but she took no notice of the fire and disappeared in the darkness. Thus the night passed on. He no longer felt any sleepiness; and, as the pirate chief slept soundly, he could not bring himself to awaken him. The first faint streaks of dawn had just appeared in the sky when Zappa started up.

"What has occurred? Why did not you summon me. Paolo?" he exclaimed. "Ah! you were unwilling to awaken the angry lion. I thank you, though, for your consideration. You have kept our watch-fire in well, I perceive. Throw more wood on it, and we will presently kindle such a blaze as will light us on our way before the sun arises. Go, call your sister and the English girl, your voice will alarm them less than mine. I will rouse up my traitorous followers — for we must be away from hence without delay. We know not what weather the morning's sun may bring."

It was still almost as dark as at midnight, when Paolo summoned the two

ladies. They soon made their appearance, prepared for their perilous voyage, and refreshed by their night's slumber, notwithstanding their extraordinary position and the rudeness of their couch.

Zappa's first care was to arrange the provisions in the centre of the raft; over them he erected the tent, which, though much reduced in size, afforded sufficient shelter for the ladies. He then summoned them to take the seats he had arranged; but it was not without some fear and hesitation that they left the firm rock for so frail an ark, and it was not till Ada recollected the danger of remaining, that she could persuade herself to go on board, followed by Nina.

Leaving them under charge of Paolo, Zappa summoned his men, and each of them was seen to take a bundle of the burning embers in their hands, and to proceed with them to the ship. Once again they came back for more embers, and the remainder of the wood, and almost before they could return to the ship, a bright volume of flame was seen to burst forth from every part of the wreck. The pirate hurried on board, followed by his men. Two went on either side to work the oars; the others tended the halyards and sheet, while he stood at the helm. The ropes which secured the raft to the rock were cast off, the crew gave way with the oars, the sail was hoisted to catch a light northerly air, and a strong shove sent it gliding through the water at a rapid rate.

"Farewell, farewell," exclaimed Zappa, turning round to gaze at the burning wreck. "No enemy can now boast that they have made a prize of the bark which has for so long been the terror of the seas, nor even of her shattered timbers. Long, long will it be before your like is met with again."

The raft glided onward, guided by the flames. The light was seen far off by many eyes; but little wist they at the time that there was consuming the last remnant of the long much dreaded Sea Hawk.

Chapter Thirty Nine.

The bright sun at length arose, and as his warming rays fell on the raft, they served to cheer the hearts of the adventurers. The raft had made but little way, for the wind had failed them completely, and the sail had been lowered as totally useless, so that they had to depend entirely on their oars, to make progress towards the south, while the current still carried them along at a faster rate to the westward. The pirates were, as may be supposed, excessively anxious to get on shore as soon as possible, it mattered little to them where, because, while they remained afloat, they might, at any moment, be fallen in with by one of the vessels in pursuit of them; and even should they be met by any merchantman, they were perfectly unable to defend themselves, and should they be recognised, they would equally be delivered up to justice. So fast, however, did the current run, that it appeared very probable, not only that they would be carried far to the westward, but that they might pass the island altogether, and be obliged to attempt to gain another. Zappa spoke but little; his mind was troubled with many thoughts, though the present earnestly claimed his attention; he saw that if they could not fetch the island, their voyage would be much prolonged, and they would be exposed to many additional risks; and pointing this out to his men, he entreated them to exert themselves to the utmost. From the muttered words and growls he heard, he perceived that he must still be on his guard against them, for they had conceived the idea, he had no doubt, that if they could once free themselves of the ladies, whom they believed to be the origin of their disasters, they should no longer be pursued; but it did not occur to them, that unless the English lady was restored, in safety, to her friends, their case would in no way be bettered. Luckily, their intended victims did not understand them, and Zappa would not alarm them by warning them of what he had heard. He told Paolo to be on his guard, and kept his own weapons ready to be used at a moment's notice. On went the raft, a thin pillar of smoke marking the spot whence it had been launched.

Zappa had been silent for some time.

"Nina," he said at last, "you have endeavoured lately to induce me to quit the life I have hitherto led. Your persuasions have influenced me greatly, and I would now gladly follow your wishes; but, alas! all the wealth I possess in the world went down in the hold of the Sea Hawk, and I am now again a penniless adventurer. I could never consent to depend on you, even had you wealth to support me, and I shall therefore once more be driven to follow my old calling on the ocean. Not my own will, but fate, drives me to it."

"Oh, no, no; neither fate nor necessity drives you to it!" exclaimed Nina. "Had the wealth, for which you mourn, not been lost, I would not have consented to use it. My brother and I have sufficient in our own country for all

our wants; what is mine, surely is yours also."

"And I have in my own power a sum which some would consider an ample fortune," said Ada; "it is more, probably, than would have been demanded as my ransom, and yet I will gladly make it over to you, provided you quit for ever your lawless calling, and place your wife in safety in her native country."

"Refuse the generous offer," said Nina, rising from her seat, and placing her hand on his arm. "Do not be tempted to rob the fatherless orphan. We shall have enough, without depriving her of her property."

"Peace, girl," said the pirate. "I will not now further speak on the subject. It is folly to speak of the future when the present demands all our care."

He spoke truly. His attention, while the conversation I have described was going forward, had been less occupied than was requisite during the last few minutes, in guiding the raft, and observing the direction in which she was drifting; when, looking up, he saw on the starboard side, at no great distance from them, a ledge of black rocks, whose heads were just flush with the water, which broke over them in a line of hissing foam, threatening to wreck the raft should it once be driven against them. The pirate urged his men to exertion, for every instant the raft drifted nearer and nearer the danger. All hands went to the oars, for they saw that by their own exertions alone could they hope to escape.

The end of the reef, which it was necessary to clear before they could be again in comparative safety, was still a considerable way off; and yet it seemed scarcely possible, at the rate at which the raft could be urged on, to avoid striking it. Never did Zappa more anxiously wish for a breeze to carry them clear; for though, to the inexperienced eye, the danger appeared but slight, he knew that, if the raft, for an instant, struck the ledge, it would be forced on to it by the current, then the slightest increase of wind would form waves which would quickly sweep them all off to destruction. So slight, however, was the surf, that, at a little distance, it had not been perceived; and even now, as Ada and Nina watched it, the expression of the countenances and the eager gestures of the men alone assured them of the risk to which they were exposed.

Several times Zappa had looked astern, in the hopes of seeing the signs of a breeze coming up in that direction.

"Ah, our good genius has not deserted us," he exclaimed, at last. "Row on, my men — row on. The wind will come in time; but we must not slacken in our exertions till it reaches us."

These encouraging words had their due effect; the crew, already beginning to weary, aroused themselves afresh, the raft glided on, her head turned off from the rocks; yet still she neared them, and the side almost touched the outer ones, when the voice of the chief was again heard.

"Hoist the sail, my men," he exclaimed. "Be quick about it, and we are safe."

The sail was hoisted, and bulging out with the first breath of the wind aided to keep the raft from the threatened danger. Again the wind fell, and they once more glided towards the rock; but a stronger puff came, and they rapidly

increased their distance, till Zappa was able to steer on a parallel line with the reef, and they shortly had the satisfaction of seeing the dangerous point far astern. In this manner the greater part of the voyage was accomplished, and the day drew on; but still they were at some distance from the land.

The breeze, however, continued, and there was now little or no prospect of their passing the island, and drifting out to sea. They were about four miles off the nearest island, and were going at the rate of perhaps two knots an hour through the water, when, as Nina was watching the ever-changing countenance of the pirate, as troubled thoughts passed through his mind, she saw him start, and shading his eyes with his hand, cast an anxious glance towards the west. Long he looked, and as he, at length, turned his face once more towards her, she observed a fierceness in his eye and a stern frown on his brow, which at once aroused all her fears.

"I see that something is again amiss," she said, looking timidly up at him. "Oh, tell me what it is has agitated you?"

"Look there," he said. "A cause sufficient to make many a bold man, circumstanced as I am, tremble," he replied, in a slow, determined tone, pointing, as he spoke, towards the north-west. "Do you see yonder stranger, which has just hove in sight?"

"I see the sails of a ship above the horizon. But what harm can she do to us?" said Nina. "If she sees us, and takes us on board, she will carry us to some land, whence we may proceed to Italy."

"You forget that, to the hunted pirate, all men are enemies," answered Zappa, bitterly. "I could not venture on board a merchant-vessel, without the risk of being recognised, and, if my eyes deceive me not, yonder craft is no peaceful trader, but rather a British ship of war."

"Heaven forbid it," exclaimed Nina. "But should she be, still the raft is so low in the water, that, at the distance we are off from her, we surely shall scarcely be recognised."

"I wish that I could think so," said Zappa; "but on board that craft there are numerous sharp eyes on the look out, and our sail may long since have been seen from her mast-heads. She is also, I well know, one of the very ships sent in chase of the Sea Hawk, and will not allow us to pass unquestioned."

"Even should she be an enemy, are we not so near the shore that you may easily escape thither?" asked Nina, who was unwilling to acknowledge, even to herself, the danger to which Zappa was exposed.

"She is standing this way, and, by the manner in which her sails rise from the water, she is making rapid progress towards us," murmured the pirate, speaking to himself rather than answering Nina's question. "Ah! I know her now; and long ere we can reach the shore she will be upon us. Well, we will strive to the last. Fate may, for this once, favour us. The wind may fail, or, by chance, we may not be seen; and if, when I have done all that I can to escape, rather than be captured, to hang alongside those wretches I saw not long ago on the fortifications of Malta, I have but the brave man's last resource to fly to,

and the wave on which I have so long loved to float shall be my grave."

Ada Garden had heard the previous part of the conversation with feelings between hope and fear. She trusted that the ship in sight was a friend; and yet she could not tell what effect it might have on the pirates when they discovered that such was the case. She deeply regretted, also, the fate which she feared might await Zappa, were he captured, notwithstanding the efforts she purposed to make to preserve his life, more certainly for Nina's sake than for his own; yet she was grateful to him for the forbearance he had shown towards her.

It was an anxious time for her — indeed, the joy and satisfaction she would otherwise have felt at the thoughts of her own deliverance was much alloyed by grief for poor Nina, who, at the moment of realising her fondest hopes of reclaiming her husband, found them rudely torn from her.

The crew had not yet observed the stranger, as they were occupied at the oars, or tending the sail, and Zappa was unwilling to alarm them before it was necessary; for he knew their caitiff nature, and though ferocious enough when they were sure of victory, he could not now depend on their courage, and he thought that they were very likely, when they saw that all chance of escape was gone, to quit their oars, and refuse to exert themselves further.

On came the stranger till her hull rose out of the water, and the report of one of her guns was the first intimation the crew had of her vicinity. They all looked round with astonishment, not unmixed with terror; but the calm bearing of their chief reassured them.

"Bow on, my comrades," he said. "That ship will not fire at us, and in another short hour we may be among our friends on shore."

The stranger was, as she drew near, seen to be a brig of war, and the ensign which blew out from her peak showed her to be British.

"I know her," he muttered in Romaic. "She is no other than the accursed Ione, which has already wrought me so much injury. To escape from her is hopeless, and naught remains for me but to execute my last resolve. Paolo, come here." He now spoke in Italian. "You know well how to steer, so take the helm and keep the raft for yonder headland."

Paolo came aft and took the pirate's place at the helm, who, putting his hand on his arm, continued in a whisper, "Now show your manhood, for to you I commit the charge of those men. Save their lives, if you can; and you yourself, with the testimony your sister and yon fair girl can give, will run no hazard. Say that Zappa refused to fall alive into the hands of his enemies, and bravely met the fate he had awarded to so many. Farewell."

Whether the act of giving up the helm to Paolo, or the expression of the pirate's countenance, made Nina suspect his intentions, she herself could scarcely tell, but her eye was upon him, while her limbs shook with dread, and, just as he was about to take the fatal leap from the raft, she sprung up, and grasped him convulsively by the arm, while her brother seized him on the other side, so that, without running the risk of upsetting the raft, or dragging them both into the water, he could not execute his dreadful purpose.

"You shall not — you shall not!" exclaimed Nina, trembling in an agony of fear, and scarcely able to utter the words she wished to speak. "Commit not so dire a crime, or fill the cup to the brim, and drag me with you. In destroying yourself, you slay me likewise."

As the unhappy girl said this she clung to him, endeavouring to draw him to the centre of the raft.

Ada had been afraid of leaving her seat, for she saw the risk to which all were exposed by the struggle, and that the weight of another person thrown on the spot might complete the catastrophe, though her agitation was scarcely inferior to that exhibited by Nina.

"Stay, stay, signor," she exclaimed — "before you commit the impious deed you threaten, listen to me. You would seek a certain death, and certain punishment in another world, to avoid the risk you run of meeting it at the hands of my countrymen in this — now listen to me. I have already promised Nina to intercede in your behalf, and I now solemnly vow to you to employ every means in my power to preserve your life, and I feel almost certain of success. A petition made by me under the circumstances of the case will, I am confident, be attended to, and you may yet enjoy many years of happiness with one who is so well able to afford it you."

"Lady," said Zappa, "again you have conquered me. Unworthy as I am to live, I accept life at your hands, and confide in your promise, though something tells me it will avail me but little. Nina, you need not thus so fearfully clasp my arm. I will not attempt to escape you, girl."

As he said this, he allowed himself to be led forward by Nina, and sat himself down on a chest, where he remained for some minutes with his face buried in his hands, and bent down on his knees. Paolo steered as he had been directed, and as the raft had for some time passed all the rocks and shoals to be feared, the task was not difficult. Ada, meantime, watched anxiously, the approach of the English brig; but the wind, she thought, was lighter than it had been, for the distance between them did not appear to decrease so rapidly as at first, and as she looked alternately from the brig to the shore, she thought that there was more than a probability of their reaching it before they were overtaken. The pirate seemed indifferent to his fate, but he was once more aroused to exertion by a shout from his men, and guided by what they said, he turned his eyes towards the shore, whence, from behind the headland towards which they were steering, the long low hull of a mistico was seen stealing forth, with her pointed lateen sails hauled close on a wind.

"The Zoe, the Zoe," shouted the pirates. "Our comrades come to our assistance."

There could be little doubt that the mistico in sight was the Zoe.

"But is she manned by our friends?" thought Zappa, whose suspicions were keenly alive to treachery. "If she were, would she thus venture out in the very face of an enemy?" The men, however, seemed convinced that she came as a friend, and welcomed her with every extravagant sign of joy. Though so near

them, she had to make several tacks before she could reach them, whereas the brig of war, being before the wind, came down steadily towards them, and was rapidly approaching within range of her guns. Zappa watched them both. The mistico was manned by Greeks, for their picturesque costume was easily distinguishable, but he was not certain that they were friends; and far rather would he have fallen into the hands of the English, than into the power of his own countrymen. Should he continue his course, and should they prove enemies, the moment he was recognised would probably be his last, and those with him would be sacrificed; but, on the other hand, if he lowered the sail and attempted to pull up to the brig, he might lose the chance of saving himself and his followers. He saw the risk of having to trust to the clemency of the British authorities, whom he had so often, by his misdeeds, offended. He was decided on continuing his course by seeing the mistico get out her sweeps, and from the point where she then was, she could lay almost up for them. In a short time all doubt was at an end, well-known faces were recognised on board, and greetings, loud and frequent, were exchanged between them. A universal cry of sorrow was uttered as the loss of their favourite Sea Hawk was announced, though their chief was warmly welcomed, as they saw that he was among those saved, and no mutinous feeling was perceptible among them. The sail was lowered, and he raft was soon alongside the mistico. The crew jumped on board, and pointing to the approaching brig, urged their friends to instant flight, but Zappa still remained with the rest.

"Lady," he said, addressing Ada, "I leave you here, whence you will speedily be rescued by your own countrymen, and to your charge also I leave this poor girl; you will, I feel assured, see her safely restored to her country and her home; and Nina, listen to me; should I succeed in escaping my enemies, I will join you there, and in peace and safety forget the dangers we have passed."

"Listen, Nina," said Ada. "You cannot serve him by accompanying him, while with me you will speedily, I trust, be in safety."

"What, leave him now in danger and in difficulty!" she exclaimed. "No, no, I am not so light of feeling as to do that. Farewell, sweet lady. You have loaded me with a debt of gratitude I cannot hope to repay."

She stooped as she spoke, and kissed Ada's brow, then sprang back towards Zappa, who was stepping on board the mistico, for the pirates loudly summoned him, and with good cause, for at that moment another square-rigged vessel was seen coming round the east end of the island. Nina was in time to clasp the pirate's arm.

"Oh, take me with you!" she cried. "Your lot I will share, your fate shall be mine."

He clasped her round the waist, and seizing the stay of the mast, leaped with her on board. Paolo stood irresolute a moment. He looked at Ada, she turned her face from him. He saw his sister among the pirates. He recollected his devoted love for her, and the sacrifice she had already made, besides which he felt the hopelessness of his passion, and just as the raft was being cast off,

he followed her on board the mistico.

The next moment Ada Garden found herself the only occupant of the raft, drifting on the face of the water.

Chapter Forty.

The Ione had in vain chased the Sea Hawk. She had examined every island in her course, and searched in every bay and nook, and behind every rock and headland, but the pirate still evaded her, till captain, officers, and men were almost worn out with their labours. Fleetwood, it may be supposed, did not save himself, and it could scarcely be expected that he should allow his officers to do so; in truth, however, every man and boy on board was almost as eager in the pursuit as he was, and fatiguing as it was, never was any duty performed more willingly, though, as they could relieve each other, they were not so much exhausted with fatigue. Night and day he was on deck, and it was with difficulty he could be persuaded to take any food or rest, expecting, as he did, that the next few hours would place the Sea Hawk in his power. Thus day after day passed away. Sometimes a sail hove in sight, and they stood after her in chase, but only to come up with her to find that she was some English trader to the Bosphorus, or Greek man-of-war, of perhaps little less doubtful character than the Sea Hawk herself. The inhabitants of the islands either knew nothing about her, or would give no information, nor could any clue be obtained from any craft they fell in with; so at last Captain Fleetwood resolved to return south again, keeping close along by the Greek coast, to examine the dense group of islands and islets of which I have spoken.

The wind had been light all night, and the Ione had made little progress; but as the morning broke a breeze sprang up from the northward, and she hauled in a little to fetch the easternmost of the islands, among which she was about to cruise. A Greek pilot had been taken on board on the Zone's first entering the Archipelago. He was a clever old fellow, and he undertook to carry the ship in safety through all the dangers with which she would be surrounded. Zappa had once plundered a ship of which he had charge, and he was doubly anxious to get hold of him. All the officers were on deck with telescopes in hand, sweeping the horizon, while the captain, as was his custom every hour, had just gone aloft with his glass to take a wider sweep, and to assure himself, with his own eyes, whether any sail was or was not in sight.

"Poor fellow," said Linton, "I am afraid the captain will never live through it. He is worn almost to a skeleton, and he looks as if a fever were consuming him. Should anything dreadful have occurred, I am afraid it will kill him when he hears of it."

"I fear so too, and it would be the last way I should wish to gain my commission," said Saltwell, with much feeling. "I wish to Heaven we could fall in with this phantom rover."

"It takes a great deal of worry to kill a man," observed the doctor, who had no great faith in the effect of any but physical causes on the body, the consequences of a limited medical education, though he was a very fair

surgeon. “If he persists in going without food and sleep, of course he will grow thin.”

“That’s very well for you to say, doctor; but when a man’s heart is sick he can’t eat,” answered Linton. “It is the uncertainty of the thing is killing him. Let him once find the young lady, and he will pluck up fast enough; or, let him know the worst, and, as he is a man and a Christian, he will bear his affliction like one, I’ll answer for him.”

“Deck, ahoy!” hailed the captain, from aloft. “Keep her away one point more to the southward.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” answered Saltwell, and every telescope was pointed in the direction the ship was now steering.

Nothing, however, was to be seen from the deck; but the captain still kept at the mast-head with his glass, intently watching some object still below the horizon. At last he descended, and summoned the pilot, with the first lieutenant and master, into his cabin, where a chart was spread out on the table.

“And we may stand safely on towards that island on our present course without fear of rocks or shoals, pilot?” he asked.

The answer was in the affirmative.

“There is a strong current setting from the eastward, you say, and you have known many vessels wrecked attempting the passage? Then, Mr Saltwell, pack all sail on the brig. There is a large boat, or a raft, with a square sail, to the south-east of us, which we will overhaul without delay.”

Royals and studding-sails, alow and aloft, were now set, and away the Ione flew before the breeze. Now the wind fell, and now it freshened; but the brig gained rapidly on the chase, which, by the little way it made, was soon suspected of being a raft. Then came all the horrible doubts and fears, naturally suggested to Fleetwood’s mind — but we will not dwell on them.

“Sail, ho!” sung out the hand at the foremast-head.

“A felucca-looking craft right under the land ahead of us,” was the answer to the usual questions.

Saltwell himself went aloft to ascertain more clearly her character, and soon returned with the report that she was a mistico beating up for the raft.

“She will be up to it, too, sir, I am afraid, long before we can reach it,” he observed. “Shall we get a gun ready to fire, sir?”

“In mercy’s name, no!” exclaimed Fleetwood. “We do not know what innocent people might be injured.”

“I meant to fire at the mistico, sir,” said the lieutenant. “She is, I am certain, a piratical craft, and if those on the raft are of the same kidney, she will assist them to escape; or if not, her people will rob and murder them under our very eyes.”

“You forget, Mr Saltwell, that we cannot be certain of that craft being a pirate, and till we are, we have no right to fire,” said the captain. “Besides, our shot might strike the raft, or the pirates, if such they are, might fire on it in

revenge."

The cry of "a sail on the larboard bow" interrupted the conversation, and, as the glasses were turned in the direction indicated, the sails of a lofty ship were seen appearing above a headland, which ran out from the east end of the small island which lay before them. The mistico could not yet see the stranger, so she stood on fearlessly towards the raft. The people on the raft were then seen to quit it, and to go on board the mistico, which directly kept away, and ran to the westward, evidently to avoid the stranger which she must have just then seen for the first time.

The ship made the number of the Venus, and after standing on some little time, tacked and stood towards the Ione. The mistico, it must be understood, was now about a mile from the shore, and little more than the same distance from the west end of the island, while the Ione was another mile to windward of her, so that if she sailed well, she might easily get round the point, and then by keeping away among the cluster of islands and rocks further to the south, very likely escape altogether.

To avoid this, Fleetwood made the signal to the Venus to bear up and run round to the south end of the island, to intercept the chase, trusting to his senior officer following his wishes. Old Rawson was not a man to stand on etiquette, and if a midshipman had signalised him he would have obeyed the order, and he instantly put up his helm, and ran back again out of sight, though the mistico was already too far to the westward to profit by the change by dodging round in the same direction.

"We must leave the raft to take its chance, sir, while we chase the mistico, I suppose," asked Saltwell.

"Yes, by all means — haul up a couple of points on the starboard tack."

"Port the helm. Larboard fore braces. Starboard after braces," cried Saltwell.

"Avast," exclaimed Captain Fleetwood, who had been looking at the raft through his glass. "Starboard the helm again. Keep her as she was. The Venus will look after the mistico. There is some one on the raft. It is the figure of a female, and by heavens she is waving to us. It is, it must be — "

His agitation was so great, that he was obliged to support himself on Saltwell's arm, who sprang to his side to catch him, thinking that he was about to fall to the deck.

The brig ran on till she neared the raft, a boat was lowered — her captain threw himself into it. He was speedily alongside the raft; in another moment Ada Garden lay fainting in his arms, overcome with excess of joy and gratitude to Heaven, and love for him, who had rescued her. Thus he bore her up the side of his ship, and was about to carry her below when the report of a gun was heard booming along the water. It seemed to have the effect of arousing Ada; for at that instant she opened her eyes, and gazing into her lover's face as she pressed the hand which clasped hers, she whispered —

"Oh, do not let them kill him, Charles. For his sake, for he treated me well; for the sake of that poor girl — spare him — I promised him. Oh, hasten to save

him!"

Her earnestness might have made a less sensible man jealous; but Fleetwood knew her too well, and loved her too well, to have any other idea than the true one, that she was anxious to fulfil a promise to the letter, and in the spirit with which it was received.

"I will do my utmost, dearest," he answered; "I will do all you can wish, but I know not whence that gun can have come; for the Venus has gone round the other side of the island. Keep her after the mistico, Mr Saltwell, and hoist a white flag at the fore, to show her we mean her no harm. Fire a gun also away from her to draw her attention, and she will perhaps stand back towards us."

These orders were given as he stood at the top of the companion-ladder before he conveyed Ada into his cabin, where little Marianna, almost out of her senses with delight, was arranging a sofa on which to place her. She again went off into a fainting fit, during which, while Marianna was searching for restoratives, and the surgeon was making his appearance, Fleetwood, as he knelt by her side, and called on her name, could not resist the temptation of bestowing many a kiss on her fair brow and lips, while he pressed her cold hands within his. The remedy was efficacious — perhaps Marianna thought it would be so, by the long time she was in procuring any other, as probably did the surgeon; for Ada had opened her eyes, and was able to sit up before he entered the cabin with the implements of his calling under his arm, which he had brought, not that he expected there would be any use for them, but as a plausible excuse for his dilatoriness.

At length, however, Captain Fleetwood tore himself away from Ada's side, and left her to the exclusive care of the surgeon and her maid, while he hurried on deck to endeavour to overtake the mistico before she got under the guns of his consort, who, of course, was not likely to treat her with the leniency he had undertaken to do. A generous man, when he gets an enemy, especially a personal enemy, possessed of courage or any other noble quality, into his power, has a pride and satisfaction in pardoning him, and shielding him from punishment, and such was very much the feeling which animated Fleetwood, when he endeavoured to induce Zappa to return under the guns of the Ione. The pirate had certainly been, to him, a very great enemy, but he had been an open and bold one; he had caused him much misery and suffering, both bodily and mental, yet he had behaved with forbearance towards those in his power, and now that his beloved Ada was once more in safety, Fleetwood felt not only willing, but anxious, to preserve him. When he reached the deck he soon ascertained from whence the firing had proceeded, for another vessel had appeared on the scene. She was a brig, which had evidently come round the south side of the island, and was now rather more than three miles to leeward, standing up towards the unfortunate mistico, which she had just got under her guns. The mistico was by this time nearly two miles from the Ione, and with her sheets eased off, was standing along close in shore, with the hopes of getting round the west end of the island, and thus again away to the eastward, inside of

her new enemy, not knowing that the Venus had already gone round there to intercept her.

"What brig is that, Mr Saltwell?" asked the captain, as he came on deck, his countenance expressing very different emotions from any which had appeared there for many a long day.

"She carries the Greek colours, sir, and we make her out to be our old friend the Ypsilante. I think she can be no other," was the answer.

"It is her, there can be no doubt," said Fleetwood; "but I wish my friend Captain Vassilato would understand our signal. I am afraid that he will destroy the mistico and kill those on board before we can get up to her."

"There can be little to regret in that, sir," said Saltwell. "It will save the hangman some work, if he sends them all to the bottom together."

"You would not say so, Mr Saltwell, I am sure, did you know that there is an unfortunate girl on board, the wife of the pirate, who has rendered great service to Miss Garden, as well as her brother, a young Italian, whom I am most anxious to save, as I am also the pirate himself," answered Fleetwood.

"Then I am sure, sir, every one on board will be most anxious to second your wishes," said the first lieutenant. "And allow me, in the name of the officers and the ship's company, to congratulate you, Captain Fleetwood, on the fortunate issue of our adventures in the recovery of Miss Garden. We all feel as we ought to feel — the most sincere joy and satisfaction at your happiness, and, perhaps, you'll understand what we want to express without my making a longer speech about it, but the fact is, we haven't had time to cut and dry one, and I didn't like to put off saying this longer than we could help."

"And I, on my part, must not lose a moment in thanking you, Mr Saltwell, and the officers and ship's company, for the zeal and perseverance you have exhibited on this very trying occasion," returned Captain Fleetwood, putting out his hand and pressing that of his first lieutenant, warmly. "You have all done me the greatest service any men could render another, and I am most sincerely grateful to you all. Pray say this to all hands, for I cannot now more publicly express my feelings. We must settle some way to mark the day as a bright one on board, but we shall have time to think about that by-and-by, and we must now see how the mistico gets on."

It promised to fare badly enough with the unfortunate mistico. Either Zappa did not see, or did not comprehend, the Ione's signal, for instead of attending to it, he continued running down the west shore of the island, directly into the jaws of the Greek; but he reckoned probably that he should be able to hug the shore so close that she could not come near him, and he then hoped, it seemed, to get away among the rocks and reefs to the southward, where she could not venture to follow. This the Greek was equally resolved to prevent her doing, and no sooner had she got her within range of the guns, than she opened the fire of her whole broadside on her.

Though she had not seen the people getting on board from the raft, she had no doubt of her character, and seemed determined to award her the pirate's

fate. The Ypsilante, it must be understood, was on the starboard tack, with her head about north-west, while the mistico was running about south, and about to haul up as soon as she could round the island on the larboard tack, so that the attempt to escape was not altogether so hopeless as might at first have appeared, had not the Venus gone round to intercept her. Zappa, of course, recognised the Ypsilante, and, knowing that her gunnery was not first-rate, he probably hoped that, as she could not venture into the shoal water, where the mistico was, she would not knock away any of his spars, and that he might manage to escape clear of her. The wind, however, as the two vessels approached each other, came more from the eastward, and at the same time fell considerably, thus exposing the mistico much longer to the fire of the brig, which now opened upon her at the same time with musketry. Several of the shot had told with dire effect, and those on board the Ione could perceive that many of the pirates had been killed or wounded. At last a round shot struck the mainmast, and down came the mainsail on deck. The pirates, seeing that all hopes of escaping in the vessel were gone, were observed to leap overboard in an endeavour to gain the shore by swimming, in which many of them succeeded, though some in the attempt were swept out by the current, which still set to the westward, and sunk to rise no more.

The mistico, deprived of the guiding power of the helm, and without any after sail, ran off the shore before the wind, in the direction the current was likewise drifting her. She thus passed at no great distance from the Ione, which had reached her too late to prevent the catastrophe. Captain Fleetwood, and all on board, were anxiously watching her as she drew near them. On her deck two forms only were seen. Near the shattered mainmast lay the pirate Zappa; the hue of death was on his countenance, and his side, torn and mangled by a round-shot, told that he was beyond all human help. He was not deserted in his utmost need. The unhappy Nina, faithful even to death, knelt over him. His hand was locked in hers. Her eyes watched the last faint gleam of animation which passed over those much-loved features. She recked not of her own agony, for a purple stream issuing from her neck, told where a bullet had done its fatal work on her.

In vain she tried to conceal it from her husband. It was the last sight he beheld, and it added to his dying pangs to know that she also had suffered for his crimes. Once more he opened his eyes, now growing dim with the shades of death. He beheld the look of unutterable love fixed on him, and in that, his last moment, he understood what he had before so little prized. He attempted to press her hand, but his strength failed him in the effort, his fingers relaxed their hold, and Nina, wildly calling on his name, received no answering look in return. Again and again she called, then with an agonised scream, which was heard even on board the ships of war, and which made the hearts of the rough seamen sink within them, so fearful did it sound, she fell prostrate across the lifeless body of the pirate.

The Ione soon ran close to the mistico, and a boat being lowered, Fleetwood

leaped into it, and went on board her, accompanied by the surgeon, who had discovered that Miss Garden had very little occasion for the exercise of his skill. They lifted up poor Nina, but they had come too late to save, for death had kindly released her from the misery which would too probably have been her future lot. Fleetwood, believing that it would gratify Ada, had the bodies carried on board the Ione, to be interred on shore; and as no other had been found on her decks, the pirates had probably thrown their slain comrades overboard. He searched in vain for Paolo Montifalcone; he could scarcely believe that he would have deserted his sister at such a moment, and he was fain to conclude that he had been among those killed by the first broadside of the Greek brig. She had hove too close in shore, and had sent her boats in chase of the fugitive pirates, but none of them were overtaken.

The two brigs then ran round to meet the Venus, when Captain Rawson ordered the Zoe to be burnt in sight of the island, as a warning to its piratical inhabitants.

It was proposed by Captain Vassilato to make an expedition inland, to hunt them up; but Captain Rawson considered that it would not be worth the loss of time, as their chief was killed, observing that, after all, they were, probably, not much worse than a large proportion of their fellow-islanders, and as their vessel was destroyed, they could do no more harm, for the present.

The three vessels then made sail for the island of Lissa, where the Vesta had just before arrived.

The seamen and marines, who had formed the garrison, were then ordered to embark on board their respective ships, first having dismantled the rude fortifications, and tumbled all the guns over the cliffs.

The bodies of Nina and the pirate chief were conveyed on shore, in two coffins, and buried, side by side, in a green spot, under the shade of the only remaining tower, which, to this day stands as a monument to their memory.

The island, where so many of the stirring events I have described took place, is once more silent and deserted, except by a few harmless fishermen, among whom, however, the name and deeds of the famous pirate, Zappa, and his stranger bride, are not forgotten; and, as they point to their graves, they say her spirit may be seen in bodily form, on calm moonlight nights, standing on the summit of the cliff, watching for the bark to convey her to her distant home.

Colonel Gauntlett's delight on getting on board the Ione, and finding his niece in safety, and with the hue of health once more returning to her cheek, showed the affection he felt for her. He wrung Fleetwood's hand warmly.

"I have done you and your profession a wrong," he exclaimed, as he did so; "and I am not ashamed to own it. From what I have seen of you and your brother-officers since this work has been going forward, I am convinced that there are as fine fellows in the British navy as there are in the army; and while both remain firm and loyal to their sovereign and their country, as I am sure they ever will, we may defy the world in arms against us. But to the point — as you, Miss Ada, happen to prefer a blue jacket to a scarlet one, however much I

might, when I was a youngster, have pitied your taste, egad, you have chosen so fine a fellow inside it, that I promise, when I slip my cable (as he would say), to leave you and him every rap I possess; for from what I have seen of him, I am very certain that he loves you for yourself (which, by the bye, shows his good taste), and does not care one pinch of snuff for the gold he knows that I am reputed to possess."

Ada, on this, threw her arms round her uncle's neck, and thanked him over and over again for his kindness; while Fleetwood assured him, with a frank honesty which could not be mistaken, that he only spoke the truth, and that he intended to have done his best to marry her with or without his consent, though he expected to forfeit every chance of getting a penny with her.

The Ione touched at Cephalonia on her voyage to Malta, where the colonel found that, as he was supposed to be lost, another officer had been appointed to his post. This, however, was much to his satisfaction, as he was anxious to return to England to make arrangements for the marriage of his niece.

On reaching Malta, the Ione was ordered home; and as Ada was not yet his wife, Fleetwood was able to carry her and her uncle to England, where, without the usual vexatious delays, his happiness was soon after completed.

Of our characters, all I can say is, that most of our naval friends got on in their profession, and that the greater number are now post captains.

After the conclusion of the Greek war, in which he greatly distinguished himself, Captain Teodoro Vassilato paid a visit to England to see his old friends, Captain and Mrs Fleetwood, and he is now an influential person in his native country.

Our honest friend, Captain Bowse, must not be forgotten. He returned to England in the Ione, and soon supplied the loss of the Zodiac with an equally fine brig, in which he made numerous voyages to all parts of the world, and was able to lay by, for his old age, a comfortable independence, which, I am happy to say, he still enjoys.

At the end of nearly every voyage, he used to run down to pay a visit to Captain and Mrs Fleetwood, at their place in Hampshire; and, on one occasion, he persuaded the lady to allow him to take her eldest boy, who was a little sickly, a short summer cruise.

Young Charles was so delighted with his trip, that nothing would satisfy him till he was allowed to enter his father's noble profession, to which he promises to be an ornament, and is now a lieutenant of two years' standing. Among other accomplishments, he is a first-rate hand at spinning a yarn, and often amuses his shipmates with an account of his father's adventures in chase of the Sea Hawk.

The End.